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THE FOAMING MORE SHORE

Manuel Alexander White





THE FOAMING FORE SHORE

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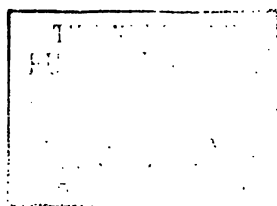
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“‘Dear God,’ he breathed—‘I shouldn’t have risked taking you out on the bay in that great wind!’”

THE FOAMING FORE SHORE

BY
SAMUEL ALEXANDER WHITE

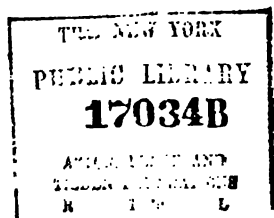


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RALPH PALLEN COLEMAN

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	The Schooner <i>Graywing</i> . . .	3
II.	The Freighter <i>Auk</i> . . .	7
III.	The Flower of the Còast . . .	11
IV.	Admiral Pellier and the <i>Esperance</i>	15
V.	Hauling the Trap . . .	20
VI.	Chateau, the Storied . . .	24
VII.	Old Peter's Room . . .	28
VIII.	Unlawful Mesh . . .	33
IX.	The Toast . . .	42
X.	The Return of the <i>Esperance</i> .	46
XI.	The Barter-House . . .	51
XII.	Full Voyage . . .	57
XIII.	His Father's Son . . .	68
XIV.	Pillars of the Law . . .	77
XV.	The Seining . . .	85
XVI.	In the <i>Esperance's</i> Wake . .	91
XVII.	The Message from the Magdalens	97
XVIII.	The Wreck of the <i>Lady Fair</i> .	102

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
XIX.	When the Ebb Tide Flows .	107
XX.	The Song of the Magdalens .	112
XXI.	Trapped	121
XXII.	The Hazard of the Floes .	127
XXIII.	The Goddess of the Gulf .	134
XXIV.	The North Beach	141
XXV.	The Soul of the Island World	147
XXVI.	Exiled	160
XXVII.	The Vanguard	168
XXVIII.	The <i>Montcalm</i>	174
XXIX.	No Passenger	180
XXX.	The Fisher's Gold	187
XXXI.	The Night Catch	195
XXXII.	The Call of the Mainland .	201
XXXIII.	Salvage of the Storm . . .	205
XXXIV.	Flotsam from the <i>Hornet</i> .	212
XXXV.	The Hand of Jacques Beauport	216
XXXVI.	Flight	224
XXXVII.	The End of the Chase . . .	232
XXXVIII.	In the Heart of the Buoy .	240

THE FOAMING FORE SHORE



THE FOAMING FORE SHORE

CHAPTER I

THE SCHOONER "GRAYWING"

Now, brothers, for the icebergs of frozen Labrador
Floating spectral in the moonshine, along the low black shore!
Where in the mist the rock is hiding, and the sharp reef lurks
below

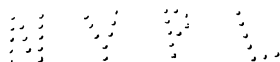
And the white squall smites in Summer, and the Autumn
tempests blow;

Where through gray and rolling vapour, from evening unto
morn,

A thousand boats are hailing, horn answering unto horn.

WHITTIER'S "The Fisherman."

HUGHIE HAY, lookout on the Gloucester schooner *Graywing*, queen of the American fishing fleet that fished the Labrador waters on the heels of the advantageous Reciprocity Treaty of 1854, paused at the foot of the perpendicular ladder that led from the vessel's deck down into her cramped cabin. In the act of unceremoniously breaking in on the scene below, his captain's uplifted finger held him, and he waited thus, staring across the smoke-blurred forecastle triangle, waiting for the forefinger of the brown sea-fist to fall.



4 THE FOAMING FORE SHORE

It was a huge fist he watched, and the frame behind, lolling on a bunk, fully matched the fist. A full six feet it sprawled, ponderous in its bulky oilskins, the frame of a Viking surmounted by a Viking head.

Waves of fair hair, luxuriant, silky, topped bronzed features, fiercely tender, and from under golden brows bold sea-blue eyes looked out as Norsemen's eyes in the ages gone looked out from their shield-hung bulwarks. They were the eyes of pride, the eyes of a conqueror, the eyes of a man who would never be denied, and yet in the face they illumined was more than colossal daring, more than unalterable determination. In it was that philosophic repose of the seaman who in his thirty-five years of voyaging had communed deeply with the deep sea and gaged its measureless strength as vastly over and above the measure of his own.

In the near-by bunks that lined the oilskin-decorated walls sat the rest of his crew: "Irish" Kerrigan in his attitude of eternal expectoration, shoulders hunched, hands in pockets, his ruddy Erin-bred face glistening under the light of the lantern hung on a beam and his pipe and his brogue on the tip of his tongue; "Boston Jim," slim, straight, and strong as a stanchion, with sallow skin and features gentle, almost esthetic, as if he might have been a New England parson drifted out to sea; Patterson, a lopped-off Titan of a man, placid, somnolent-eyed, five feet tall but two hundred and twenty pounds in weight; Brown, a wizened

Gloucester shark with a twang that suggested an A-string somewhere down in his bony chest; "Scotty" McCaig, a braw strutting Highlander whose strut had compromised with the sailor's roll in his columnar legs till he two-stepped his way wherever he went about the schooner *Graywing*; Tom Halifax, a famous sealer with the scars of a dozen trips to the ice floes marring his leathery face; and Bolero, the cook from Cuba, dark-hued, quiet, excellent, like the black cigars of his birth-place with which he hazed his cookery-perfumed galley.

God-fearing men of Gloucester all, native or adopted, up on Newfoundland's French shore for cod, in Belle Isle Strait with their trap, they listened to the prayer of the Reverend Lance, the itinerant missionary of this vast fore shore dropped aboard by night from his Church yacht *Star of the Sea*.

Upstanding, straight in his ministerial black by the long table that ran from the sharp angle of the *Graywing's* bows to her stout foremast, his spectacles glittering over short-sighted eyes and his purged face haloed by the yellow light of the oil lantern, he was concluding his short service with a benediction, giving them the peace of God and asking His protection for them while they seined the deep under menace of storm and fog and reef and berg.

Quick with an oath in anger, with a fist-blow in a brawl, they were, nevertheless, each according

6 THE FOAMING FORE SHORE

to his breed, inherently religious, and to Lance's benediction they chorused sonorous "Amen." As into the eyes of God they had looked overlong into the depths of the sea, and the Omnipotence of its creation had bound them with stronger bonds than any landsmen's creed or sect.

Swift to devotion, swifter perhaps to action, the captain's finger of warning dropped for his lookout Hughie Hay, and Hughie, himself a fresh-faced, auburn-haired lump of a Gloucester lad with the glowing cheeks of a woman and the wise gray eyes of a child, went on to announce the news he had carried down the ladder.

"Cap'n Taylor, it's thet freighter ez wuz makin' into Chateau; thar's trouble aboard—yellin' an' fightin' goin' on," he informed. "She's yawin' about somethin' turrible an' thar's no tellin' what truck's draggin' overside to walk plumb through aour cod trap. I thaought you aought to knaow!"

"Confound it all, Hughie—you're right I ought to know!" cried his Viking captain.

He sprang from his bunk as he spoke and rushed for the ladder, yelling for his men to follow.

"Tumble up, boys!" he exhorted. "Out of the way, Hughie—I'll go first! Oh, yes—Lance, come on if you want to!"

CHAPTER II

THE FREIGHTER "AUK"

TAYLOR was up the ladder and on deck with amazing agility for one of such great frame, and on his heels tumbled Hughie and all the crew with the Reverend Lance hastily ascending in the rear.

From the deck of the *Graywing* the captain looked out across the heaving Strait of Belle Isle, across the green-blue waters streaked with frozen froth, jewelled with pale-emerald floating ice and overlaid with the mother-of-pearl of a rising moon. Southeastward, between him and Belle Isle Island, wrapped ghost-like in Atlantic fog, yawed the freighter Hughie Hay had sighted, not an ocean-going cargo steamer but a sixty-ton schooner carrying Labrador stationers to their summer fishing-stations.

Too poor to own their own schooners, the stationers were freighted down the coast to their rooms every spring and herded up again like cattle in the autumn on vessels belonging to the firm with which they dealt.

"Yonder she is!" the captain pointed out to Reverend Lance. "And a fine little plague-ship for your ministering, Lance!"

8 THE FOAMING FORE SHORE

"What ship is it?" demanded Lance, peering short-sighted over the shimmering sea.

"The *Auk*, over from Bay of Islands on Newfoundland," Taylor told him. "Belongs to old Peter Laval and doing business from Chateau to Chidley."

"*H'm. H'm.* Laval, eh? One of my best church supporters," commented Lance.

"Sanctimonious old whelp," corrected Taylor. "Good heavens, his old wagon will ruin my eight-hundred-dollar cod trap! Where's the French fishery cruiser? Where's Admiral Pellier and his *Groix*?"

"Yaonder off'n York Point, Cap'n!" spoke Hughie Hay.

He pointed where, almost invisible behind a jumble of low icebergs deep azure in the shadows, the long black hulk of the Fishery Protection Service cruiser lay at anchor together with the Admiral's private yacht *Esperance*, which he used as an auxiliary vessel for shore work 'round the harbours.

"Then why isn't he on his job?" demanded Taylor who had run foul of Pellier several times on his Newfoundland voyages and who had at last been definitely warned off the French shore. "If I happen to dry a seine taut in the sun he's after me for the size of my mesh, but Laval's blundering *Auk* here can—by the tall Pole Star, look, there's no one at her wheel! We've got to board her!"

Swiftly he sprang to take his own wheel, beckoning the regular wheelsman, Brown, to his side, and at the same time calling orders to his men who, swift as he, ran up the big mainsail and backed over the jib.

"No time for dories, boys," he warned. "Have to jump her rail as we go by. Brown, grab this wheel when I say! And you, Bolero, fall to and handle the sheets for Brown when he comes about on the other tack!"

Under Taylor's guidance the *Graywing* caught her stride, headsails ballooning, fore and main booms crashing across as she leaped toward the yawing *Auk* not three cable-lengths away. The freighter swung drunkenly to starboard. Taylor veered a point or two in his course, and as swiftly, as silently, and as smoothly as a knife skirts a pot of grease he skirted her rail and barked to Brown at his elbow.

Brown's hands fell upon the spokes Taylor's hands left, and Taylor with a running jump vaulted the rails of the *Graywing* and *Auk* as a double hurdle. Hughie Hay, Irish Kerrigan, Boston Jim, Patterson, Scotty McCaig, and Tom Halifax were over the hurdle with him. With him they landed upon the cluttered deck of the *Auk*, and as they heaved themselves up out of the amazing muddle of things that burdened the freighter they found to their surprise the Reverend Lance in their midst.

"You here, too, Lance?" grinned Taylor.

10 THE FOAMING FORE SHORE

"Haven't lost your college legs yet, eh? Well, maybe you'll need your college fists as well. Looks like a free-for-all fight and lots of unsavoury facts—but steady, boys o' mine, steady, we have to handle the schooner, you see, before we handle her crew. Lower the heavy canvas—yes, both of them, fore and main."

He himself grasped the freighter's kicking wheel and quickly brought her to under jumbo alone.

Then with a rush he and his men jumped away from the canvas-billowed booms and dived down among the struggling mass that glutted the *Auk* below decks.

CHAPTER III

THE FLOWER OF THE COAST

A FINE little floating plague-ship, eh, Lance?" was Taylor's war-cry as he went smiting right and left into the packed rabble that would have made a full passenger list for a five-hundred-ton coasting steamer.

Being of only sixty tons, the *Auk* had no space below to boast of, and what space she had was crammed to the last inch, so that Taylor and his crew could get no footing at first but rode upon the hips and backs and shoulders of men in their effort to smash an opening in the jam.

According to the custom of freighters, the *Auk's* hold was first spread with a layer of unbreakable cargo. A second layer of traps, nets, and seines overspread this. While upon the bed of twine rested the bunks of the stationers with their gear in bags, boxes, and barrels sheering in pyramids to the deck overhead.

Here they herded, eating and sleeping in cramped, unsanitary quarters, carrying on a travesty of cooking by turns at the tiny galley or bolting their food raw. Nothing but make-shift sail-cloth partitions screened the women's bunks from the men's. In the mêlée these partitions had been

torn away and shrieking women and girls in various stages of dishabille were maelstromed in the swaying horde that trampled their bunks under foot and sent the tiers of boxes and barrels toppling on their heads.

Under the showering ruin they huddled in the dancing light of the smoky lanterns, raising hopeful eyes at the coming of the *Graywing's* crew, and one young girl, crouching for shelter at the foot of the mast, flung out her arms in appeal to Taylor in the lead.

"Ah, *mon Américain—mon Américain!*" she cried.

White as a lily she gleamed in the unwashed horde, her delicate, beautifully chiselled, oval face terror-bleached till it seemed carved from ivory. Over the tapered curves of her half-bare shoulders where her enfolding cloak lay low on her neck, over her forehead patricianly high, her hair was tossed in a tangle like silken floss, and through the golden net her great eyes flashed out, eyes violet-blue as the tint of Labrador ice in shadow, as the water-heart of a lonely cliff-walled Labrador fiord—such eyes as a man may see but once in a thousand miles of Labrador coast.

"Ah, *mon Américain—vite!*" she appealed in a voice like the silver lapping of the summer waves. "*Mon Américain—vite!*"

"Great heavens!" exclaimed Taylor involuntarily as he struggled toward her. "Who in the name of the mermaids is she?"

"Marie Laval—the flower of the coast, they

call her!" spoke the voice of Lance at his shoulder. "You know old Peter. He's her father."

"But—but how is it I've never seen her before?" panted Taylor, knocking men this way and that in his effort to reach her.

"She's been schooling at St. John's. I guess she's through this summer. I remember now old Peter told me he was going to take her on the stations. Yonder's old Peter behind her—and her mother, old Anne. Both too fond of their smuggled brandy, Taylor, if I do say it with a clerical tongue. Can't you smell it in the air? A perfect reek and I shouldn't be at all surprised at this bedlam! I know Peter's brandy has been the cause."

"And that's their daughter!" marvelled Taylor. "The flower of the coast! Yes—a flower in the slime! Quick, boys o' mine, get the women up on deck!"

Drunkenly clinging to the mast behind Marie, he had full glimpse of her parents in his rush, old Anne, brown-faced, brown-eyed as a gipsy, fat, ungainly, in slovenly galoshes, tubbed-up skirt and greasy headshawl covering her oiled black hair from which gold ear-rings peeped; old Peter in worn hip boots and oilskins, his yellow toothless face lighted by cold, colourless, icicle-like eyes and, by strange anomaly, shaven bare except for a narrow snow-white fringe of whisker that rimmed it from ear to ear under his drooping southwester.

He glimpsed them, unconsciously noting every

14 THE FOAMING FORE SHORE

characteristic, every detail, but his thought was only of Marie, and, jamming swaying bodies apart with his shoulders and knees, he forced an opening and gathered her pliant body into his arms.

"*Merci, mon Américain—merci, mon Viking!*" she half-laughed, half-sobbed in impetuous gratitude. "I had the fear of death under those stamping heels but, *voilà*, I knew you would come when I called!"

"Ha, my flower of the coast!" breathed Taylor as he fought his way on deck with her. "Could I leave such a flower as you in the slime?"

CHAPTER IV

ADMIRAL PELLIER AND THE "ESPERANCE"

BEHIND Taylor, breaking into the cool night air upon the chaotic deck, came Lance, guiding the stumbling Peter and Anne up the ladder by the arms, while after Lance, with tugging and shouting, Hughie Hay, Irish Kerrigan, Boston Jim, Patterson, Scotty McCaig, and Tom Halifax heaved the women to safety.

As Taylor straightened himself up on the *Auk's* deck he saw through the black snarl of her mainsheet the wings of another schooner all silver in the moonlight.

"Brown," he yelled, taking it at first for the *Graywing*. "Brown—but hold on, it's not my schooner! It's the *Esperance*."

"*Oui*, the *Esperance*, and quite at your service, *Capitaine* Taylor," spoke an even voice from the stern of the *Auk*.

Taylor wheeled and stared through the amazing litter of boats, oars, buoys, and fishers' paraphernalia that covered the vessel from bow to stern. A boat full of men was moored to the rail, and three boarding figures cast long, inky shadows across the afterdeck.

Instantly Taylor recognized the figures that cast the shadows: Pellier of the *Groix*, his well-knit body and military shoulders filling his commanding admiral's uniform, his close-clipped brown beard touched silver by the moon and his keen brown eyes, far-focused from their constant sea-ranging, burning out under the peak of his cap; Jacques Beauport, boyish midshipman of the *Groix* likewise in uniform, dark-eyed, swarthy-skinned, with the stealthy reserve of a heart unfathomable stamped on his Breton face; and "Codroy John," Pellier's skipper of the *Esperance*, a gigantic bearded Newfoundlander dressed in moleskin trousers and canvas jacket, with a rugged, craggy face and deep blue eyes prophetic as the eyes of a seer.

"At your service, *Capitaine* Taylor!" repeated Pellier. "And what is the trouble this time, I would like to know?"

"None of my making but yours for the'tending," answered Taylor, gruffly. "Though I've done half the job for you. There was a drunken fight below and we got the Lavals and all the women out for fear of their being trampled."

"*Dieu*—the Lavals!" exclaimed Pellier, leaning forward and staring at old Peter and Anne in the moonlight.

His eyes switched to the face of the girl Taylor held, and the Gloucester captain saw him start and draw up his shoulders more rigidly.

"Then in that case," Pellier went on rapidly in

a voice official in its intonation, "I shall put them ashore in my boat while my men restore order in the *Auk's* hold. Jacques! Codroy John! Tell them I am aboard and let that still their tongues or they will be taken in charge."

Jacques Beauport and Codroy John dived below, and Taylor could hear them yelling above the din, Beauport's shrill, staccato cries spacing Codroy John's booming roar.

"Stinking cod-hunters! *Voilà*, will you revel in the cells at St. John's? Listen, makers of a thousand smells—the admiral himself is on your cluttered deck. *Oui*, Admiral Pellier of the *Groix*!"

"Aye," in Codroy's bass, "I'd like to die if he bain't! A stench ye be in the nose o' the Lard, ye fools! A powerful lot o' breakers o' Newfoundland navigation laws, runnin' a vessel wild like this! Back to yer bunks or ye'll lose yer voyage and face the Admiralty Court at St. John's!"

Under the threat and the warning of Pellier's nearness the tumult died down below decks, and Pellier himself waved old Peter and Anne, meek as whipped curs, into the *Esperance's* waiting boat.

"You, too, Marie—quickly!" he begged, anxious to retrieve as far as possible an awkward situation.

Marie hesitated, her violet-blue eyes meeting Taylor's for a moment in the moonglow before she slipped out of his protecting grip.

"*Au revoir*, mon Viking, I will thank you better when I can," she whispered as she glided after her father and mother.

With an odd feeling that somehow he had been robbed of the fruits of his efforts below, Taylor watched the black boat streaking off to the *Esperance*.

"Marie, Pellier called her," he exclaimed, turning slowly to Lance. "So the admiral knows her as well as the parents—knows her that well?"

Lance nodded confidentially.

"Knows her well," he coincided, "and he would marry her in a moment if she would speak the word. But, there, hers is the heart of a maid with a score of suitors, among whom Jacques Beauport and his commander are chief. The heart of a maid, Taylor, and an impulsive heart at that. You know how they are. She won't pledge herself to the admiral, much less to Beauport, though old Peter and Anne urge and threaten and scheme. Do you think her beautiful, Captain?"

"The most beautiful girl on the fore shore!" admitted Taylor without hesitation. "But is she—is she—well, Lance, I can't bring myself to say it of a girl like her, but you know what some of the women on these cursed freighters are, don't you?"

Again Lance nodded, seriously, regretfully, his face all thoughtful lines in the moonlight.

"That I do," he confessed, "and my protest based on this specific case goes to the Government to-night. But not Marie! I can take an oath under heaven on that. Marie is pure as the heart of an iceberg is pure. A victim of nothing but circumstances, Taylor—that and unsavoury parents.

Hello—there's another schooner abeam of the *Esperance*. Is it your *Graywing* coming about? My eyes fail me in the dazzle of the moon."

Taylor looked up and gave an affirmative nod of his head.

"The *Graywing*, boys o' mine," he announced to his clustering crew. "Borrow some of the *Auk's* dories for a minute and we'll row back to the schooner."

CHAPTER V

HAULING THE TRAP

IN THE blaze of the rainbow dawn across the glittering façades of the scores of scattered icebergs the *Graywing* hove to by Taylor's trap berth in the strait, and seven of the eight dories dropped overside.

Ever quick to progress, it was the Americans themselves that had introduced seines into the haunts of the cod. In place of the ancient method of taking the fish by hook and line of jigger, Captain Norman of Brigus had brought the cod-trap down on the Labrador. No longer men with the ready money to purchase a trap bothered with the hook and line or jigger or puttered with the trawl.

With the great seines rich harvests were drawn from the icy deep, and Taylor himself on more than one occasion had gathered an even hundred quintals at one haul. Of the customary two hauls a day, this was the lucky morning haul, and with song and shout the *Graywing's* crews in the dories raced expectantly for the moorings of their berth.

Dead ahead of them, shining blood-red upon the sapphire sea, bobbed the four anchored buoys that buoyed the corners of the vast square-topped bag

of meshed twine. The bag itself, invisible in the watery depths of the strait, was open at the top, its edges full fifty feet to the side, supported by long lines of cork floats streaking from buoy to buoy.

From one corner branched a leader, a single wall of net that walled the Belle Isle currents across and inveigled up or down-swimming fish into a funnel-like opening in the trap. Once in, they never found the small end of the funnel again, but swam imprisoned 'round and 'round their huge elastic cell.

Underrunning the agitated edges of the trap, the seven dories sculled in place and, laying aside their oars, the seven rowers seized the floating edges of the pound. Standing up to their work, swaying to the heave of the swell through the strait, timing their pull to a fisherman's chanty, they hauled their trap, lusty giants reaping their finny harvest as fishers of all ages, ever since the day of Peter, have cast forth their nets and harvested the sea.

Heaving thus in the sudden glare of golden sunlight, etched starkly against the round blue hills of the Atlantic beyond, every man stood out, his individuality fixed, like a row of cleanly sculptured bronze statues poised against the azure sky; the Viking Taylor, the adolescent Hughie Hay, the expectorating Irish Kerrigan, the parson-like Boston Jim, the lopped-off Titan Patterson, the braw McCaig, the battered sealer, Halifax!

To the drone of their chanty they pursed and pursed the trap, rising and falling, heaving and holding, quivering there in a web of striking colour, colour of indigo ocean, crimson buoy, green-painted dory, sun-gilded oilskins, diamond-dewed net—a blood-pulsing picture all vivid as a startling seascape hung upon dun walls.

Lustily they heaved and lustily they sang.

And in the centre of the picture, rimmed 'round by the dripping, scintillating net that sagged with the weight of its catch, boiled a maelstrom of quicksilver, the packed cod, mobile twenty-pounders lashing furiously as they were pocketed tightly in a solid mass.

"By the ribs o' sunken Spanish galleons!" cried Irish Kerrigan at the sight, "Ye've topped wan hundred quintal this toime, Capten!"

"That she is, men—an' a quarter," calculated the lopped-off Titan Patterson. "Ain't it a record for the coast?"

"I believe you, Patty," beamed Boston Jim. "I reckon one hundred and ten was all——"

But the rest of their calculations was lost in Taylor's roar.

"Alongside, Brown!" he bellowed, freeing one bronzed hand and waving it to the wheelsman of the *Graywing* who, with the exception of the Cuban cook, Bolero, was the only man left aboard. "Walk her up in a hurry!"

"Right-o, Cap'n!" twanged Brown in acknowledgment. "Araound an' araound she goes!"

HAULING THE TRAP

23

Holding hard, they could see Bolero dive like a dark snake for the jib to back it over, could mark Brown give and take his spokes with sureness and serenity, and almost before Taylor's waving hand returned to its grip on the net the silver-gray schooner, graceful as a gull, breasted lightly down on the dories.

CHAPTER VI

CHATEAU, THE STORIED

WHAT livers to fry!" gasped Bolero at sight of the prize haul.

He took the brown cigar from his teeth and wiggled it exultingly. Then he and Brown jumped snappily to the rail to handle the dory tackles.

"Sluice them on deck—quick!" urged Taylor. "Sag enough here to unjoint a man's arms!"

Bolero and Brown hooked on and swiftly swung outboard the dip-net rigged on a pulley. Up and down the splattering dip-net plunged. In a silver stream the cod were scooped inboard, all alive and flopping in the pen, and while the dories, leaving Taylor aboard, sheered off again to reset the empty trap, Brown and Bolero hastened to spread the splitting-tables amidships.

"Never mind, boys," Taylor stopped them. "I'm not salting these down. I'm taking them in to Chateau to be made ashore."

Without a wink of surprise Bolero and Brown desisted, Bolero going off immediately to his tiny galley and Brown taking his accustomed place at the wheel. They made no comment then, but when the dories were nested aboard once more and sail

crowded on the *Graywing* the crew had opportunity to pass the word as the schooner headed inshore.

"Aye, an' 'tis made fish ashore they'll be, ye ken," winked Scotty McCaig to Halifax. "An' for why? Are the cod nae plentiful an' this the first week o' June? October's a lang way ahead, Tammy. Lots o' time tae dry a few hundred quintals ashore an' still fill our hold tae ballast us hame tae Gloucester! Eh, mon—wha' are ye gulletin' doon yer laughs for?"

"Why're you puttin' that squint in them canny eyes of yours, Scotty?" countered Halifax. "Did you hear me gossip a word about dryin' ashore? So a Chateau firm makes them cod—what? Well, Scotty, I'll just venture a whisper in your cauliflowered ear. I'll bet you a pound o' Fisher-man's Friend I kin name the room they'll go to."

"I take ye! Wha' room, ye seventh son o' a prophet?" challenged McCaig.

"Old Peter Laval's room!" prophesied the battered sealer.

Wing and wing, the speed of a water-witch in her rakish beautiful lines, Taylor himself in Brown's place at the wheel, the *Graywing* drove on for Chateau Bay, the grandest fiord on Labrador's southern fore shore. Past York Point, its western entrance, she tacked, raising the sheer basaltic cliff of the Devil's Dining Table capping Henley Island and fluttered on through the cove-like harbour of Chateau itself.

Rimmed 'round by towering Laurentian hills covered with birch, balsam, and spruce, snuggling at the foot of Beacon Hill the hoary thousand-foot sentinel of all, spread the ancient, storied settlement. Here, Taylor knew, Jacques Cartier in 1534 had first set down his wandering foot on the shores of his *La Nouvelle France*.

Here was the founding of his first settlement of French *colons* that grew by the hundreds, to be swelled in the middle of the seventeenth century by bold Breton emigrants, to be further augmented a full century later by exiled Acadians who in 1743 located at Mátashquan and inevitably drifted in to Chateau till it hived in its present glory of swarming population and hummed with the ceaseless industry of the fishing.

The industry of the fishers was the blood and fibre of the place. Newfoundland merchants marketed the catch, and of the several firms doing business there Peter Laval secured the bulk of the trade. Of all the old-time dealers, slave-masters of the outports and rogues and hypocrites at heart, Taylor acknowledged old Peter the peer.

No more skilful hand than old Peter's to cull a fisherman's voyage and grade it for his profit as damp or Madeira!

No swifter pencil than old Peter's to charge the planters double prices for supplies and carry on his books without interest their balance at the settling up!

No, nor no greater pride than Peter's when sober,

nor no deeper devotion as, a pillar of the Church, he sat in the front pew and prayed for his delinquent livyeres in the seats behind him.

And, lastly, no more sordid coiner of men's and women's lives into Terra Novan dollars as evidenced in his custom of working women as cheaper labour than men upon his Labrador stations.

CHAPTER VII

OLD PETER'S ROOM

LAVAL'S establishment lay in the curve of the cove below the village graveyard sleeping under the slant of Beacon Hill. It consisted of a long wooden jetty, a barnlike supply store generally known as the barter-house, miserable, tumble-down fishsheds and a disgraceful room, sod-thatched and rough-boarded on unbarked studs.

Up and down the jetty stalked old Peter, his keen, colourless, icicle-like eyes overseeing everything that went on and at the same time watching the crowded shipping of the harbour.

"What have you there, *Capitaine* Taylor?" he cried as the *Graywing* swung to anchor off his wharf. "A trap haul for me, perhaps?"

"Aye, Peter, a record haul of one hundred and twenty-five quintals for a trap of that size, all alive and kicking, yours at the current figure," proffered Taylor. "And no damp or Madeira about them—no, nor any Miquelon brandy either!"

Peter grinned a deep grin that wrinkled his sanctimonious face.

"*Voilà*, I was drunk last night, but I am sober and penitent to-day," he declared piously. "*Oui*,

and the *Auk* is many souls lighter and gone on her way to Camp Islands. It would have been a pity to drag a hole through a bag like that. My room is ready, *Capitaine*, and I'll send the carteel boat out for your fish. No, you can't moor alongside till I get the harbour-end of my jetty in place. *Comment?* You know how much there was to do."

Peter stumped down the wharf to give his orders, and immediately the carteel boat, a long fish-barge used to freight the catches from the fishing-grounds to the rooms, put out in charge of homespun-jacketed livyeres. The morning haul of the *Graywing* was dumped in and conveyed across the harbour, Taylor himself riding his own dory, trailed by the carteel boat with the livyeres and the *Graywing's* men aboard, in to old Peter's stage.

As he approached the straddling skeleton of the stage which was built of longers he scanned it for the first glimpse of the roomies Laval was working. Surely, Taylor thought, with all his riches, hard-fisted though he was, old Peter would hardly work his own womenkind in a room like this. Surely he would not—by Jove, yes, he would, too! Yonder was the slim swaying of a figure he had seen before!

Three laden dories ahead of the carteel boat were pewing the last of their loads to the stage, and there in the stagehead position stood Marie passing the gleaming cod along a chute to the cut-throat old Anne. Her double-bladed knife flash-

ing in the sunlight, old Anne in two strokes nicked each fish on either side of the neck, with a third slash ripped each belly open and slung the mangled carcass along to the header.

The header was a quarter-breed Eskimo woman, leathered, wrinkled, impassive as a Buddha, who pulled heads off and entrails out, separated the livers with wonderful dexterity, dropped each liver into the liver puncheon and slid the disemboweled fish on for the final operation of splitting.

The splitter, a full-blooded Montagnais squaw with one hand mittened, boned the cod with three lightning slashes and slapped them into a large vat whence her fourteen-year-old boy wheeled them in a dredge barrow away to the fish sheds to lie a month under salt in layers three deep before being dried.

It was an efficient crew of roomies old Peter worked. From stage to salt bulk there was no pause in the glittering stream of cod—not till the carteel boat with the trailing dory swung up to the wharf and Marie raised her eyes to look fairly into Taylor's.

"Mon Dieu!" she gasped.

Taylor shuddered inwardly at sight of her slim loveliness in the ugly mess, but he carried himself boldly in the awkward moment.

"Good morning, Mademoiselle Marie," he greeted, seeming not to see the smatter and slime. "I have brought your father a trap haul to handle for me."

"*Bon matin, Capitaine Taylor,*" she returned, swiftly recovering herself. "You must be a mighty fisher."

But her involuntary halt in her work had balked the rapid machine. The pitchforked fish piled up on her, the cutthroat old Anne and the rest waved idle knives in the air, and old Peter let out a roar like a bull.

"Name of a name, Marie!" he bellowed. "Do not stand there like a rock pillar with a dozen quintal of fish at your feet. *Diable*, move them along!"

Marie flushed scarlet, her face like some rare, delicate crimson flower among the silver gleam of the cod, and Taylor saw the fire leap to her eyes as she shot a wicked side-glance at her father. Taylor himself had only one thought—to get her out of that mess, but he was too shrewd to try to bully old Peter or to appeal to his better nature. Laval was not a man to be bullied or influenced by appeals. To move him one had to speak in terms of his pocketbook.

"But look, Peter," he argued, "your Marie is too slight for such rush work. I have a big trap haul here and very likely another coming by evening. Let me put one of my own men in her place. Let me put Hughie Hay here, as good a stagehead as ever kept the dories forking. It is in my own interest and with Hughie on the stage it will be better for you as well."

"But the pay," demurred old Peter. "Marie

gets nothing, for *voilà*, it is the return she gives me for her St. John's schooling."

"Hughie gets his wage and share as one of the *Graywing's* crew whether afloat or ashore," Taylor hastened to assure him. "He will cost you nothing."

"*Tres bien*, then, let him take Marie's place," accepted old Peter with alacrity.

Hughie sprang out and took the girl's position as stagehead, while Marie turned to Taylor, a wonderful light of gratitude in her eyes. He had extricated her quickly and neatly from her demeaning bondage without touching her pride, and she was not loath to let him see that she admired his delicacy.

"Ah, *mon Viking* of the *Auk*, how can I thank you?" she breathed gratefully, yet with something of coquettishness.

"Why, by taking Hughie's place aboard the *Graywing*," laughed Taylor.

With a touch of gallantry he handed her down into his dory under old Peter's icicle-like but unprotesting eyes.

"The schooner has nothing to do till the trap haul this evening, so till then I'll just take you for a holiday cruise 'round Chateau Bay!"

CHAPTER VIII

UNLAWFUL MESH

AND what a cruise and what a holiday it was! And what a respite for Marie—the clean deck of the trim *Graywing* under her feet in place of the slimy stage, the savoury sea breeze in her nostrils in lieu of the reek of disembowelled cod, the laughing voice of this great Viking of a sea captain in her ears instead of the snarling admonitions of her parental slave-masters old Peter and old Anne!

Care-free, buoyant, joyful-mooded as the sparkling sea itself, they poked the schooner's bowsprit into all the inner harbours of Chateau Bay, into Henley, into Antelope Tickle, into Pitt's Arm; they climbed the Devil's Dining Table to glimpse the sail-dotted panorama of the strait; and finally brought up at evening in crimson-cliffed Red Bay twenty miles to the westward.

Truly, a day of comradeship, of confidences exchanged, of romance exotically blossoming forth upon a romantic shore, a shore steeped in lore and legend and storied in love and feud. Here in the beginning the Eskimos and Montagnais wooed and warred, to be followed in peace and conflict by the English and French and, later the

northward-voyaging Americans, and blood of these ancient coastwise adventurers ran in the veins of both Taylor and Marie.

Yonder ruin of Fort Pitt, in Pitt's Arm, almost obliterated by the willow shrubbery—well, Taylor's father was one of the officers of the American privateer *Minerva* which besieged it in 1778. That old tumble-down fortress, Fort Greville, to the northward of Henley Island over there—*voilà*, few knew anything about it, but Marie could tell. Her granduncle on her mother's side, old Greville the planter, had built it to keep the warlike Eskimos away from his Breton *colons*.

Such bonds and grounds of intimacy they discovered by the score throughout the day. The day had been a blazing jewel, topaz-clear and diamond-bright, but at evening a sulphur-coloured mist came in from the Atlantic and the wind began to rise.

"A dirty squall comin,' Cap'n," prophesied Tom Halifax.

"You're right, Tom," agreed Taylor, "and we'd better haul our trap and get into the shelter of Chateau before it blows any worse."

Accordingly, the slim Boston Jim as lookout, the battered sealer Halifax relieving Brown at the wheel, they bore away through the yellowish mist for their trap berth near York Point.

"Sight the buoys, Boston?" demanded Taylor as the schooner, fleet as the wind itself, flitted ghostlike from fog bank to fog bank.

"Aye, Captain, I reckon I have their range this minute," Boston Jim sang out. "Aye, in an open patch I have them. But there's a schooner lyin' off it! Aye, and a dory underrunnin' the floats! Luks like somebody helpin' themselves to our fish."

While he sang out Boston Jim lost sight of the trap berth, but plunging through a fog bank half a mile wide, the *Graywing* soared once more into a clear water space not two cable-lengths from the trap. Riding the clear space, her topsails wreathed in the scud that blew high overhead like smoke, Taylor recognized the *Esperance*, Admiral Pellier's auxiliary vessel, with her skipper Codroy John in charge. In the lowered dory that was underrunning his floats he saw Jacques Beauport and Admiral Pellier himself, not hauling as Boston Jim had suspected but evidently inspecting the mesh of the net.

With a growl in his throat Taylor barked tart orders to his men, and, folding her wings like a gull alight, his schooner lay to alongside the *Esperance*.

"What in blazes does this mean, Pellier?" he roared at the dory in a mighty wrath. "Who gave you authority to touch that net?"

"The law, *Capitaine* Taylor," Pellier sent back. "Jacques Beauport brought word to the *Groix* in the harbour that you were using two-and-one-half-inch mesh, and I came out to seize your trap."

"Then Jacques Beauport is a cursed liar and you are a plagued fool to believe any tale he

brings!" Taylor raged. "I hauled that trap just this morning. The mesh was the lawful three-inch then, and it hasn't shrunk since!"

Taylor wheeled in his fury to grasp the boat tackles and slam a dory overside.

"I'll put Pellier and Beauport back on the deck where they belong in one blazing minute," he promised Marie.

"But let me go, too," she begged, and dropped into the dory with him as the boat rose upon the swell. "I'm going, too. There was a net seized in Chateau Harbour this morning, Antoine Lefevre's, so my father said—*oui*, and a two-and-one-half-inch mesh, if you please! Could it be substitution, *Capitaine*? That Jacques is a dark one when he has a grudge. Maybe he has taken up your own, set Lefevre's to catch you and brought the admiral to see."

"By heavens, if he has I'll brain him!" vowed Taylor.

With a surge he drove the dory along the line of floats toward the other craft, rowing so viciously that Beauport held up a warning hand.

"It's no use making such a pretty fuss, *Capitaine*," he warned. "We have the size of your mesh. *Oui*, ask Codroy John, there, whom any man well knows does not lie. Two-and-one-half, is it not, Codroy John?"

"Aye, it be two-and-one-half," boomed Codroy John from the deck of the *Esperance*. "I'd like to die if it do measure a twine-breadth more."

Taylor seized the floats and hauled in a few feet of the net.

"It's not my trap," he vehemently declared. "It's not the trap I hauled in this spot this morning. My own has been lifted and this one dropped in its place."

"*Mon Dieu*, a fine fairy-story," chortled Pellier. "Buoyed by your buoys but not your net, eh? Ho! Ho! That is a new plea for law-breakers."

"No, it's not my net," gritted Taylor. "My buoys, but not my trap!"

"Then whose is it, pray?" scoffed Pellier.

"Antoine Lefevre's, most likely," flashed Marie. "And *Capitaine* Taylor's is most likely stored away where it will not be found. Ask Jacques Beauport, there. He was the man who seized it this morning and—and used it again!"

Pellier's eyes turned inquiringly on Jacques.

"*Ciel!*" exploded Jacques, the fire flaming in his eyes. "Do you and your Yankee *Capitaine* insinuate that I—that I——"

"Yes," cut in Taylor, "you exchanged them either on your own or someone else's bidding."

Beauport choked, his swarthy face reddish-purple in his rage.

"*Canaille—canaille! Fils du diable!*" he anathematized. "*Nomme de——*"

Taylor's swinging oar stopped short his epithets. Pellier and Jacques had just time to duck low before the swishing spruce blade scarred their dory gunwale. And before they could raise their heads

anew or seize a weapon, Taylor, bringing his bludgeon 'round in its arc again, stove their whole bow with a terrific blow.

Pellier and Beauport floundered in the water, yelling for help from the *Esperance*, and Taylor looked up to find the schooner footing forward under sail. At the first sign of altercation Codroy John had slipped her in between the schooner *Graywing* and the two dories at the trap. Taylor and Marie were cut off from their vessel, and it seemed for a moment that the *Esperance's* crew might seize him in the name of the law along with his trap.

But his own crew on the *Graywing* were likewise watchful. They moved when Codroy John moved, cracking on full sail in the howling squall so that the schooner leaped across the foamy wave-crests, outpointed the *Esperance*, and drew a length clear.

Then, swinging on her heel, the *Graywing* came about on the other tack, threatening to shave the *Esperance's* bows as she crossed the auxiliary vessel's course.

Tom Halifax was yelling Codroy John warning to alter his course, but Codroy refused to shift a point. His aim was to blanket the dory, seize its two occupants, pick up the pair of floundering men and drive on before the *Graywing* could give Taylor any aid.

"All right, then, I'll bump your old wagon!" bellowed Tom.

He cut fairly across the *Esperance's* bows. There

was the high-pitched whine of taut chafing sheets, the sullen grind of timbers, a medley of cries and a volley of oaths in French, and the next moment the *Graywing's* bowsprit crashed out the *Esperance's* foremast in a trailing jumble of wreckage. The big foresail, sagging overside, held her like a sea-anchor, while the *Graywing*, swept clear and apparently unharmed, luffed up in the gale of wind.

Taylor, heaving his dory alongside with his one undamaged oar, rose on the crest of a wave. Kerrigan and Patterson, waiting tackles in hand, hooked on and brought him, Marie, dory and all on deck with a run.

"We've lost our trap, and we'll lose our schooner, too, if we don't get to shelter!" Taylor shouted the moment he struck the deck. "Crack on all you've got and run into Chateau!"

Even as he spoke Tom Halifax's cry rose above the howl of the wind.

"Ware the mainmast! Yon rough work must 'a' cracked her! Look out, she's foul in' the fore boom!"

Taylor wheeled to see the main boom poised weirdly in air, with the mainmast sagging on to the foremast and adding its windage in a terrific strain.

"Axes, boys o' mine!" he yelled. "Jump lively there!"

But as the swinging blades of half a dozen of the crew bit into the tangle, the added windage told. The foremast gave suddenly with an explosive

snap, and both masts and both booms with their ballooning sails crashed over the starboard rail.

The *Graywing* heeled till the rail went under. It seemed for a second that she would never rise out of the trough of the seas, but Taylor, with a warning word to Marie to hold tight, rushed away from her with an ax snatched from the hand of one of his men. He sprang upon the slanting stump of the foremast, at the same time yelling orders in the tumult of the breaking seas.

"Cut her clear, boys o' mine!" he clarioned, his bright blade cleaving in a circle of light about his head.

It was wild work in a wall of spray for a moment, and Marie caught her breath, her eyes on Taylor like a true Viking in storm or boarding clinging to the stump of the foremast, his fair head steel-haloed by his ax, hurling the wreckage adrift while the wind rose, bringing with it the menace of floe-ice hurtling down. The *Esperance*, in as bad a plight as they, threatened every moment to drift down on them. Her crew had hauled Pellier and Beauport aboard and were cutting their own wreckage free when the *Graywing* slowly righted and Marie drew her breath again.

"*Mon Dieu*, that was dangerous," she gasped.

"All over now!" cried Taylor.

Laughing like the Viking he was, he sprang back to her side as the foremast stump assumed a vertical position again and slid him back on to the deck.

"Rig a couple of trysails on those stumps,"

he ordered, a wary eye on the *Esperance* all clear and hard abeam.

Like magic the emergency sails fluttered on and drew, the stumps of fore and main like two dwarfed jury masts, and craftily, swept continually by the baffled sea, the *Graywing* crept from the menace of wave and wind and floe into the quiet of Chateau harbour. Hard in her wake the *Esperance* snailed in under similar rig, and for an instant the two vessels rode rail to rail before rounding to their anchorage off Peter Laval's long jetty.

"Well, Pellier," shouted Taylor, "this is what comes of Beauport's trickery. A nice mess it's made of two fine schooners! You'd better look to the whereabouts of your men after this!"

Pellier, staring at Taylor with his far-focused brown eyes as the Gloucester captain lowered a dory and prepared to row Marie ashore, answered not a word, but when the dory touched old Peter's wharf the admiral beckoned Jacques Beauport to him and closeted himself with him in the *Esperance's* cabin.

CHAPTER IX

THE TOAST

THE dark was down on shore as Taylor's dory touched old Peter's wharf, the soaring crests of the wooded hills lost in the black murk of a stormy sky, the cheery lights of Chateau pricking like golden stars through the scudding fog. About Peter's room burned evil-smelling kerosene flares, one on the stagehead, one at the cutthroat's stall, and one at the splitter's table. In the faint glow of the farther flare worked the Montagnais squaw splitting the last of the day's catch, her fourteen-year-old boy coming and going beside her as he had done since dawn, his dredge barrow bumping and squeaking dolefully in the night.

At the splitter's table old Anne was cleaning her knives on a wad of tow, whetting them keen and sticking them in the slabs, ready for the morrow. While on the stagehead, the final fish shot away, Hughie Hay leaned on his fork beside old Peter and stared in a vain attempt to make out the strange rigs of the schooners that had just cast anchor.

"*Mon Dieu*, it is you two, then," cried old Peter as Taylor and Marie climbed out on the stage.

"What have you done to your *Graywing*, *Capitaine*? We couldn't see well for the fog, but I know it is not the rig you sailed out under this morning."

"No, I had a brush with Pellier's *Esperance* and we both lost some sticks," laughed Taylor.

"*Diable!* You tell me so? Come into the lean-to and let us hear about it."

With a word to Hughie Hay to take charge of the dory and wait for him, Taylor followed old Peter and Marie over the wooden jetty. The slipperiness of the cod was underfoot, the reek of the cod in their nostrils, and involuntarily Marie shuddered. This was what she had left for a golden day. This was what she had come back to. The thought of taking fork in hand at dawn once more and standing there on the stagehead nauseated her, and a wild desire to flee the whole thing filled her impulsive being.

The lean-to backed the fish-sheds, and through a doorway all sagged askew they entered Peter's Chateau home. Of a truth it was but a summer home, occupied during the fishing-season and deserted while he spent the winter at Bay of Islands on the Newfoundland shore, but nevertheless its starkness and squalidity struck Taylor like the blow of a dirty hand.

A tin lantern hung from the low roof casting a feeble light as if ashamed glaringly to illuminate the rude habitation and display its shortcomings to visitors. Through holes in the roof the fog was dripping, hitting the hot top of the lantern with a

44 THE FOAMING FORE SHORE

sputter or streaking down the unrinded timbers that held together the aperture-filled walls. Underfoot a slab floor bowed and sprung to the tread, a bare floor, knotted, uneven, yawning with two-inch cracks, littered with its own bark that the foot skinned off at every step.

As rough as the floor were the fixings that stood upon it, a rusty, battered stove, a spruce table adzed out in a solid slab with trenailed legs and three stools to match. A three-foot cut of a log, up-ended, served as a washstand, supporting a granite basin and a pot of soft yellowish soap under an endless towel revolving on a roller.

At the farther end Taylor espied the sleeping-quarters, walled off from the main room by unplanned boards. These were simply built-in bunks, and Taylor noted with a thrill of pleasure the cleanly appearance of Marie's, its opening hung with new curtains, her sea-chest within set out for a dresser, her bed well-ordered.

Old Peter's was primitive enough, having neither curtains nor covering, his mattress a layer of moss, but Taylor knew that the hard-fisted old roomer was abroad night and day, never removing his clothes and sleeping with sea boots and oilskins on. From old Anne's he turned his eyes away, for he espied a comforter that had not been washed since her youth and deeper than that he did not care to pry.

Yet old Peter might have been a sovereign in a palace so merrily he laughed at Taylor's account

of Beauport's trickery. The predicament of the sly Jacques filled the hardy old mariner with delight.

"*Ciel!*" he chortled. "That Jacques Beauport! He is the wily rascal. No fool, Jacques, when it comes to anything he wants. But he is caught this time. But wait—you will see. Admiral Pellier is a man of honour and fairness. *Oui*, and a man of discipline. He will draw the truth from Jacques as a man corkscrews a bottle of brandy. *Voilà*, and that makes me remember I am dry! Will you have something before you go, *Capitaine?*"

Old Peter stepped over to his bunk and from a secret receptacle under the moss produced a bottle of brandy.

"Fresh from Miquelon?" inquired Taylor with a laugh.

"*Non*, St. Pierre!" chortled old Peter. "It is one of a case and there are many cases—buried, you understand, where the customs officer will never grab. *Votre* health, *Capitaine!* *Oui*, and a full voyage even if your trap is gone and your schooner dismasted!"

"Your own health, Peter; aye, and a full voyage!" returned Taylor, his eyes meeting Marie's. "Here's hoping!"

CHAPTER X

THE RETURN OF THE "ESPERANCE"

WHAT passed between Pellier and Beauport in the cabin of the *Esperance* the fishers of Chateau never knew for a certainty, but they shrewdly surmised. For in the fair weather of the next day the auxiliary vessel in charge of Codroy John crossed the strait under a single stick for repairs at Humbermouth. Furthermore, Jacques Beauport and six men of the *Groix* went with her, and at that Chateau tongues commenced wagging. It was plain enough!

Voilà, they all knew Marie Laval had another suitor, one at last whom she did not flout! Jacques Beauport, the observant, the cunning, had tried to get rid of him at a stroke, but Jacques had gone too far with his trickery and the admiral had taken a hand. How honourable, that man Pellier! The desire of his heart likely to be snatched away, and yet he had not countenanced the opportunity to take unfair advantage of his rival!

Oui, Jacques Beauport and the six who had helped him change *Capitaine* Taylor's net in secret were going across to be disciplined at the Fishery Protection Service headquarters at Humbermouth,

over on the Humber arm of Bay of Islands, Newfoundland.

Indeed, it seemed that the Chateau tongues were right, for Taylor heard no more about the charge of using unlawful mesh in strait waters. His seine was not returned, in all probability because Beauport had destroyed it, but he himself was not molested. As for Marie, she did not go back to her stagehead position on old Peter's wharf. Taylor saw to that.

Every day in the gray of the dawn Hughie Hay took up her work at the room while she spent her glorious freedom on the Chateau hills or afloat on Chateau Bay. The *Graywing* being under repairs in the harbour itself, Taylor had commissioned a trap skiff belonging to Laval and with his handy craft he tended a fresh trap, likewise bought in old Peter's barter-house, moored in his former trap-berth. His luck ran riotously. The cod had struck in in immense numbers.

Every day for three weeks and more was a big fish day. On old Peter's wharf the knives flashed early and the kerosene flares burned late while his vats bulged with waterhorse and his acres of drying flakes covered the bawn (beach). Every week and often twice a week, he shipped his made fish on a foreigner to over-ocean ports or chartered huge top-masted schooners from Newfoundland's east coast to freight it to Twillingate or Fogo.

And well he might! For the most famous cod-grounds on the Labrador were here on its southern

fore shore, on the banks and shoals of Belle Isle Strait! Slimed with their food, the Chateau shoals drew the teeming millions, and men of many nations fished while the harvest held. From all the Atlantic ports of the Union American schooners flocked; from all the Newfoundland outports all manner of sailing craft came, stationers, floaters, trawlers, gallant topmast schooners, and ponderous brigantines.

Yet amid a horde of mighty fishers Taylor maintained his reputation as the greatest of them all. No man hauled more quintals at a single haul than he, and no man sent such catches slithering along old Peter's chutes. Between hauls he and his crew worked on the *Graywing*. Like Cortereal of old he cut tall masts from the hills, and when everything was in readiness all Chateau turned out to restep the schooner and dance on her deck and old Peter's wharf in her honour as they christened her brand-new canvas with strong waters of the North.

A gay day that and a gay night with one thousand craft in the Bay, and ten thousand men and women on the beach. And king and queen of the ten thousand were *Capitaine* Taylor and Marie Laval, Taylor hoisting his flag to the foretop and Marie, beautiful as a siren, spraying the new canvas with a bottle of port and humming a little sea song as she sprayed.

As Marie finished her song she flung the empty bottle overside and pointed toward the outer reach of the harbour.

"*Mon Dieu—the Esperance!*" she cried. "As if the song called her—and what mountainous freight has she got?"

Taylor turned to stare at Pellier's auxiliary vessel boasting a new foremast and loaded with all the shining lumber and gear of a modern room. Codroy John was in charge and nowhere among her crew were to be seen Jacques Beauport and the six men who had sailed to Humbermouth with him. Chateau tongues were right indeed. Jacques was undergoing his discipline.

Yet Taylor's wondering mind did not dwell upon Jacques. He stared at the magnificence of the cargo the *Esperance* carried, the finest timbers, the most luxurious fixings he had ever seen destined for a room on the coast.

"Is it your father's stuff, Marie?" he asked. And as old Peter at that moment rolled none too steadily down the wharf to meet the schooner, Taylor hailed him with the query: "How now, Peter—have you opened your heart at last? Yonder are the makings of a palace aboard the *Esperance*, and it must have cost you a good many francs!"

"*Diable*, never a franc!" leered old Peter, regarding him and Marie with maliciously triumphant eyes. "It was paid for by Admiral Pellier."

"What?" demanded Taylor. "Is Pellier forsaking the bridge for the planter's flakes?"

"*Non!*"

Laval shook his sou'westered head and wiggled

his chin in mirthful grimace so that his fringe of white whisker wavered back and forth.

"It is to replace my own old tumble-down sheds. People have laughed and turned up their offended noses at my room. Well, wait till the old boards rattle down and yonder gear goes up instead, and we will see who cackles with laughter and casts the merry eye. *Mon Dieu*," laughing in drunken raucousness, "does it surprise you, then? Should a son-in-law not be so lavish with his wealth? *Voilà*, Pellier has spoken to Anne and myself in the way of the French for the hand of our daughter. The answer? *Ciel*, see there the marriage gift!"

CHAPTER XI

THE BARTER-HOUSE

LISTEN for the end of the dance, Lance," reminded Taylor as, half an hour later, he slipped over the rail of the *Star of the Sea* into his dory. "And watch for the two boats and don't lose a second. The thing must be done in a flash before Marie is missed. It's a good job I stowed my made fish aboard as they came from old Peter's flakes. The *Graywing* is ready for the sea except for some light tackle that I'm going up to the barter-house to get."

"Better be careful," cautioned Lance in farewell. "It's a drunken gang Peter has ashore. I'll do my part, all right. Don't worry about that."

Taylor pulled in to the wharf and zigzagging through the wild dance that was petering out to an end, went on up to Laval's barter-house. As he stepped into the lantern-lighted building that was crammed with all manner of sea gear he beheld old Peter himself and four of his cronies chuckling over their half-emptied glasses.

"*Bon matin, Capitaine*—seeing that nearly all the night is spent," gurgled old Peter. "Come and pledge my daughter's health."

"Another time, Peter, when the liquor doesn't run so strong," evaded Taylor. "I just dropped in for that light tackle you put aside for me. The *Graywing* goes to my trap-berth for this morning's haul."

"Here it is, then," mumbled Laval. "Give me a hand, *camarades!*"

The five reached into a canvas-cluttered corner of the barter-house. Their hands flashed forth again, not with Taylor's tackle but with several yards of seine that settled on his shoulders. Caught unawares, like a lion in a net, he hurled himself across the floor with the five clinging desperately to the meshes that enveloped him.

"*Diable!*" snarled old Peter. "You would plan to elope with Marie—*comment?* You would steal off in separate dories and let Lance speak the words over your heads from the rail of the *Star of the Sea* and then dart south in the *Graywing*? *Ciel*, I am not so drunk as you think, *Capitaine*. *Non*, but sober enough to lurk in the shadow of the *Graywing's* sails and overhear you and Marie. The end of the dance the moment, too! *Tres bien*, then, there it is, the last scrape of the fiddles!"

As he struggled Taylor heard the wail of the violins die away, thumping feet leave the wharf, and singing dancers pass along the beach.

"The end," taunted old Peter, almost face to face with him through the maze of meshes, yet with the protection of that maze between. "Marie is stealing off in a dory. *Oui*, and I'll tell you

something. The second dory is not lacking. It, too, is stealing off, and Admiral Pellier is in it.

"Ho! Ho! Do you understand? It is aboard the *Esperance* and not aboard the *Graywing* she will go. Pellier has a chaplain of his own, Blangard of the *Groix*, remember! A touch of wine and Marie will never know the difference of clergy nor of bridegrooms. Over their heads aboard the *Esperance*, I say, Blangard will speak the words, Blangard instead of Lance, and thus it will save a lot of trouble with the stubbornness of Marie!"

Peter finished with a diabolical chuckle at his own and Pellier's cleverness—Pellier the man of honour and fairness who fell before a mighty temptation when it came to the stake of Marie.

Taylor felt a pang like the thrust of ice in his heart. Then a red-hot surge of anger flooded over him.

"You devil, Peter!" he roared, wrenching to get his arms free from the binding seine. "You cold-blooded, shoal-born, shoal-slimed cod! First you barter her, and then you try to marry her by a trick. By——"

With the colossal heaving, with the strength of a demon he rocked from wall to wall of the barter-house, crashing its trappings this way and that, dragging the five backward and forward with the tremendous Viking power that was in him. Two of them he pinned against the wall with his bulk and jerked off their feet in a sudden lurch so that their side of his twine prison was left for a second unweighted. In that second he writhed his right

arm free and smashed old Peter full in the chest. Peter staggered the width of the room and fell backward upon a bundle of sailcloth, and before he could clamber up Taylor struck again and again and Peter's two cronies sprawled on top of him.

Whipping the seine into their faces with a final swing Taylor darted out of the barter-house doorway before the other pair could stop him. A riot raged in his heart as he ran down the wharf, straining his eyes out toward the *Star of the Sea* riding at anchorage amid the harbour craft. Though the night-shadow of the Chateau hills lay dark upon the water, the approaching dawn was lightening it a little, and he could discern the church yacht and his own *Graywing* astern of her.

There were no dories 'round the *Star of the Sea*—he must be in time! A wave of exultation swept him. A joyous cry burst from his lips—to change the next moment to a curse! 'Round the *Star of the Sea's* hull, the hull that had hidden them, broke two dories, the one spinning adrift with nobody in it, the other rocking to the struggling of two swaying figures.

Pellier. Marie. He recognized them even in the half-darkness, even before Marie's pitiful cry came across the harbour to him.

"Help, help!" she screamed. "It is Pellier. He is taking——"

The rest was cut short, but Taylor had heard enough. With a leap he was afloat, sending his dory surging out.

"Lance, did you see?" he shrilled as he boiled

by the *Star of the Sea*. "Pellier got her before she made your yacht. Peter trapped me in the barter-house, but I broke away."

"But where," yelled Lance, peering after his dory through the dark with his short-sighted eyes, "where in the name of Heaven is he taking her?"

"The *Esperance*!" Taylor snarled back. "He'll ply her with wine and the *Groix's* chaplain will marry them."

At Taylor's information Lance threw up his hands in holy horror, a phantom of supplication in the gloom, but Taylor himself was past the *Star of the Sea* and away, driving his dory like a madman to overtake the struggling pair ahead, when like a moth out of the dusk the *Esperance*, her deckload discharged and trimmed for speed, winged in between.

Taylor heard the metallic clash of tackles. Under full sail the schooner heaved the dory and the two figures in on the run and drove on out of Chateau harbour. Like a moth she went, and like the black bat that flits in the wake of the moth the warship *Groix* slipped after.

"Convoyed, *Capitaine*," half-cackled, half-croaked the voice of old Peter from his wharf, "*oui*, convoyed to a place where your *Graywing* dare not poke. The honeymoon's at Humbermouth!"

His red wrath gone with the flicker of the *Esperance's* sails, suddenly left white and trembling, Taylor turned his eyes shoreward to see old Peter

dimly outlined on his stages by one of his kerosene flares, one hand to his croaking chest that was still heaving in asthmatic jerks from the effect of the Gloucester captain's blow.

White and trembling, his red wrath gone but with the spirit of passion that glows like the white heat of fused metal, he shook his fist at the planter.

"You've taken her, you and Pellier!" he answered. "You've stolen her from me, Peter, but as sure as the sea winds blow and the tides turn I'll come again to Chateau to take her back!"

CHAPTER XII

FULL VOYAGE

AND Taylor came, not that season, for the autumn gales completely closed the fore shore to sailing craft, nor the next for Marie sent him private word to Gloucester of the motherhood that was forced upon her like the marriage, but the following spring! On the heels of winter he came winging through the strait, threading the maze of icebergs grounded on the shoals just off Chateau and drove into the harbour itself.

His vow had gone ringing from man to man along the foaming seaboard. The whole coast was agog for his coming. Day by day Marie had kept vigil from Deacon Hill, and day by day the admiral, old Peter and the disciplined Jacques Beauport had taken counsel against the lifting of the *Graywing's* sails. Jacques had been put on patrol duty with the *Esperance*, and Jacques it was who sighted Taylor's schooner off York Point and brought the news with a rush to Pellier and old Peter on the latter's new wharf.

"*Voilà*, the *Graywing*, sir!" he reported dramatically, drawing himself up proudly on the planed boards.

58 THE FOAMING FORE SHORE

"The devil," growled Pellier, wheeling from his talk with old Peter. "Where now?"

Beauport pointed where the schooner, hard in the *Esperance's* wake, was pushing through the ice-barrier. So close the barrier bulked that it ringed 'round the harbour like a wall. Three days it had lain thus, shutting in the French warship *Groix*, another French gunboat, and two British cruisers on the fisheries patrol. Big hulks could not negotiate the narrow passage where deftly handled schooners slipped through, nor did the sullen bergs show any sign of shifting.

Close-hauled, with her booms well inboard to miss the chasm-like walls of the bergs, the *Graywing* burst the barrier, the sunset flaming on her sails and on the fair head of the Viking Taylor at the wheel. Handling the sheets those on the wharf saw the well-known forms of his sturdy crew: the adolescent Hughie Hay, the expectorating Irish Kerrigan, the parson-like Boston Jim, the lopped-off Titan Patterson, the braw McCaig, the battered sealer Halifax, the wizened Brown.

Instantly at sight of the schooner the Chateau beach took up the news, fisher calling to fisher and bark hailing near-by bark.

"*Mon Dieu*, it is the *Graywing* of Gloucester come back!"

"*Oui*, I told you one hundred of you that *Captaine* Taylor would keep his oath!"

"Name of a name, then Admiral Pellier had

better look to himself or he will be left alone. What will the proud man do?"

Pellier heard the medley of comments, and his face flushed.

"Do?" he grated to Laval and Beauport. "I will show these fools! Peter, they must not meet—Taylor and Marie. I must seize his schooner before he can work any deviltry!"

"That will not be hard," ventured the fathomless Beauport.

"Name a charge, then, Jacques," flashed old Peter. "You were always quick of wit in these things."

"Why," prompted Jacques, "there is the matter of his voyage here two years ago. It is against the law for an American to load fish not caught and cured by people of the United States, and he loaded with fish you cured yourself, Peter!"

"Ho! Ho!" exclaimed old Peter, grinning hugely. "You hear, Pellier? Jacques has a long memory. You can trump up no better excuse than that. Seize his *Graywing* at once and hand it over to the British cruisers to take to St. John's. The Labrador is their shore and theirs is the administering of its law. *Ciel*, the Admiralty Court is sometimes slow. *Comprenez-vous?* The *Graywing* may rot in the harbour of St. John's before its case is heard, and while it is rotting it can not carry anybody off from Chateau."

"*Dieu*," growled Pellier with a whip-like crack-

60 THE FOAMING FORE SHORE

ing of his fingers, "it goes against my grain, but I will do it. It is either that or——"

And he finished his sentence with a reckless shake of his head as he put off to the *Groix*. Immediately the *Groix* got under way, and as Taylor boldly rounded to his old anchorage off Laval's new room, the warship crossed his bows and dropped a boat full of men alongside.

"Your schooner is seized, *Capitaine* Taylor," Pellier greeted him coolly from his place in the sternsheets.

"For what?" roared Taylor, his wrath abruptly blazing like the sun-set fires.

"For a breach of the Newfoundland navigation laws," announced the Admiral vaguely. "I shall be compelled to hand the *Graywing* over to these British cruisers to be taken to St. John's. You and your crew will be set down by the *Esperance* at the nearest American port. Get into the boat and go aboard her!"

Pellier stepped on the *Graywing's* afterdeck, old Peter Laval, Jacques Beauport, Codroy John and a dozen more at his heels, forming two guarding lines through which the admiral beckoned captain and crew.

"Come quickly," he ordered, waving a hand to the *Groix's* guns frowning at point-blank range. "There is no chance for resistance."

"You cowards!" stormed Taylor, clenching his fists in their faces. "You scheming whelps! Do you think you're going to drag me off my own deck

like a dog? By heavens, I'll sink to the harbour bottom first, *Graywing* and all!"

Defiant he crouched, his men ready set behind him, itching to hurl themselves at Pellier's men, when Codroy John's whisper snarled in his ear. Codroy stood at the foot of one of the guarding lines, nearest to Taylor, and over his massive shoulder he spat the words through his beard.

"In the name o' the Lard, go aboard, Captain!" he urged. "The *Esperance* be as swift a schooner as your *Graywing* and she do lie nearer to the stages. Will you take a look?"

Taylor darted a furtive glance shoreward, and his blood leaped. On old Peter's stagehead stood Marie, with old Anne by her side holding by the hand her toddling granddaughter. Fearful lest Pellier should see the burning in his eyes, the violet flash in Marie's, he turned his head and searched Codroy John's face. Instantly he read its friendliness, and he took up the Terra Novan's cue.

"I don't know, boys o' mine," he spoke, turning to his men with a show of indecision but passing them a warning wink; "when it comes down to the fine thing, I don't know. I don't care for myself or the schooner, but you fellows have kin back home. I forgot that. It isn't fair to you. Maybe we'd better go aboard the *Esperance* and fight our case with the law instead of with our fists."

"Now, that is something sensible, *Capitaine*," cut in Pellier, growing very uneasy at the prospect

of stubborn resistance. "It is under the law I am acting, and you have the very same privilege."

"All right, then," surrendered Taylor, "just a minute to get the *Graywing's* log and I'll be with you. I'll promise not to dig up any weapons in the cabin, but send a man with me for formality—Codroy John, if you like!"

He was off to his cabin as he spoke, Codroy John at his heels, anticipating the admiral's nod of assent for fear he should depute someone else.

"Well, Codroy," demanded Taylor, facing the Terra Novan in the closed cabin, "are you with her or with them? With her, I take it! And the *Esperance* is swift, is she, and near the stages? But what about the crew aboard her?"

"They be Newfoundlanders like myself," boomed Codroy John. "Aye, and like myself they be with her. Godfather I were to her, Captain Taylor, and I do love her like the real father she never have had or maybe like the—the real husband she never have had. The admiral and old Peter and Beauport do plan wonderful well, but they do forget we Newfoundlanders be God-fearing men. They have gone beyond the law o' God and man, and I will never forgive them for tricking her till I do see her back in your arms. The *Esperance* be ready, Captain. Marie be on the wharf. Will you take the chance?"

"Will I?" exploded Taylor, grabbing his log. "Watch me, Codroy! Come on, before Pellier has a change of mind."

The *Graywing's* log under his arm, he led the way into the admiral's waiting boat and the rest of his men filed after. Pellier, Peter, Beauport and the men of the *Groix* took their places and the rowers sent the craft foaming alongside the *Esperance*. Taylor noted that the auxiliary vessel was not at anchor, but laying to under foresail and jib, and on her deck he glimpsed her crew, six rugged Newfoundlanders whom Codroy John had vouched for.

On to the *Esperance's* deck Pellier herded them, stepping aft himself to give final orders to his men before going back to the *Groix*. The grinning Peter stepped with him and Beauport, both anxious to see the last of Taylor, but their last sight was hardly what they bargained for.

"Overboard with them all!" Taylor yelled before Pellier could give his orders. "Overboard with them, boys o' mine!"

With a roar of exultation his crew rushed the men of the *Groix*, Codroy John and his Newfoundlanders flocking to their aid, stamping up and down the *Esperance's* deck, smiting and wrestling at her rail, Irish Kerrigan, Boston Jim, Patterson, Brown, Hughie Hay, McCaig, Tom Halifax and Bolero the cook, smothering Pellier's force in the unexpectedness of their attack and hurling them into the harbour water.

Taylor himself was locked with the admiral, old Peter and Jacques, fighting the three as an ordinary person would fight a single foe. Vainly they

lunged and struck at him. Viking that he was he laughed under their blows, herding them to the *Esperance's* rail and knocking Beauport sheer over it with a lightning blow. Old Peter rushed but toppled back from Taylor's straight-arm punch, caught his legs against the rail and followed Beauport, while Pellier was plucked from the deck in the Gloucester man's arms and cast overside.

"My turn now, Pellier!" Taylor shouted as he splashed. "My turn, Jacques! My turn, Peter, you foxy old devil!"

He jumped for the *Esperance's* wheel as he cried. His crew of the *Graywing* and Codroy's of the *Esperance* were at the main-sheet, hoisting the big mainsail, and as he put over the spokes he felt the clean-lined schooner answer like his own. Half a cable's length away old Peter's long wooden jetty ran out into the water, Marie, old Anne, and the child on its edge. As the *Esperance* momentarily luffed up Marie suddenly leaped the three-foot gap to the schooner's rail.

Across the slant of the afterdeck she slid, panting with excitement, and Taylor, his right hand on the wheel, caught her to him with his left, holding her thus for a second even as he held the schooner to the jetty.

"Marie, Marie, my flower of the coast!" he breathed, his Viking blood pounding to the thrill, to the danger, to the touch of her clinging hands on his free arm and the whipping of her hair against his cheek. "But your child—the little Madeline?"

"My mother keeps her till things blow clear and we are free, and then she will bring her to me. She has turned to me at the last, my mother, just as Codroy turned."

"Good!" exulted Taylor.

"But the barrier," cried Marie, "the ice-barrier! I pray to God we may pass!"

She trembled against him, her violet eyes were ablaze with the fire of a woman awakened to the crisis of her life. Out beyond yonder ring of icebergs lay the open sea, a free path down to Gloucester, a year of fretting under Pellier's enforced marriage yoke, then release and happiness under the law. It was all that stood between her and another life, and through the gap in the ice wall Pellier and his watch-dog cruisers could not go.

Dieu, it was a stake! *Dieu*, how she prayed and clung as Taylor steered for the barrier under full sail! Chateau Harbour was in a tumult, a thousand clamours rising in the early dark that dropped suddenly as the sun failed. The beach was a-roar with fishers' shoutings, a-rumble with the thud of their feet as they ran to the stage heads to keep the *Esperance* in sight.

Like a witch the schooner sailed. Through the creeping dark and the swirl of mist that came with the dark, her sails gleamed white, pointing for the ice-barrier. Dead ahead, the *Groix's* boats were picking up Pellier and his men and the second French gunboat along with the two British cruisers were moving from their moorings to come to the

66 THE FOAMING FORE SHORE

Groix's assistance. But many crafts were in their way, schooners and brigantines at anchor, and before the warships could close the cordon the *Esperance* broke through in zigzag tacking and plunged for the gap amid the bergs.

Though the harbour surface was dark, the glittering pinnacles of the bergs still caught the rays of the sunken sun and glowed blood-red like the spires of massed cathedrals in the dusk. On the ruby peaks perched the resting sea-birds, puffins, guillemots, gulls, razor-billed auks, all black as ebony against the crimson afterglow, their sleepy mutterings drowned by the roar of the waves and the rumble of the air in the ice caverns beneath them.

Like the crash of cannon rose the rumble of the air as the *Esperance* approached the passage. Like the roar of surf on a reef broke the thunder of the swells across the emerald ice ledges. But above these both another sound ripped through the air—the belching guns of the cruisers.

“By heavens, is the madman firing at us?” gasped Taylor.

“No, over us,” cried Marie, watching the red flares of the racing gunboats. “Over us—to close the passage. Don’t you see? *Mon Dieu*, don’t take time to close-haul or——”

The rest of her words were lost in the bursting of shells on the ice pinnacles ahead, in the wailing of startled seabirds and the crash of tons of berg-tips into the gap.

Marie was right. There was no time to close-haul the schooner.

"Hold hard!" warned Taylor. "Every man hold!"

Wing and wing he drove her at the cleft, her foresail to starboard, mainsail to port, the ends of her booms rasping great furrows in the ice wall that was crumbling under the shelling. Ice fragments were raining all about, and Taylor half-stooped at the wheel over the crouching Marie, shielding her with his body against the falling lumps.

A moment the *Esperance* wedged. Then the vast drawing power of her canvas together with the lift of the surge through the gap carried her on. Her chafed booms stood out again, and, the passage closed behind her by falling pinnacles against all craft large or small, the schooner was gone in the dark of the open sea, driving wing and wing for Gloucester.

So deep was the gloom through which they bored that the sails and the very masts themselves were lost in the murk above. Even the sluiced decks seemed to dissolve underfoot, taking the blurry forms of the rest of the crew with them.

Taylor and Marie, isolated at the wheel, seemed to skim a strange sea all their own, even as their hearts skimmed a strange new life all their own, driving southward Viking-prowed down the foaming fore shore of their love!

CHAPTER XIII

HIS FATHER'S SON

A WILD romance indeed to come to Gloucester, though not without its sorrow and its pity, Taylor like some grim Norseman driving the *Esperance* through a cordon of gunboats off to his home port! His act went down in the records as an act of piracy, for Admiral Pellier kept his word and turned over the *Graywing* to the British to rot in the harbour of St. John's and never come before the Admiralty Court. And there at Gloucester, too, had come the demand of the British Ambassador for Taylor's arrest, Taylor's defiance and counter demand for the production of the unlawfully seized *Graywing* before the Admiralty Court, the fogging and dropping of the issue, Marie's divorce and remarriage and the birth of a son she called Walter after his father's name.

Aye, a romance filled with mad passion, thrilling adventure, keen hazard, the boom of cruisers' guns and the thunder of tempestuous seas, and though in the years that followed Captain Taylor Senior passed to sleep beneath the deep and though Marie Taylor passed grieving to slumber under the green sod of Gloucester's hills their strange romance did not die with them. To the Gloucester people it

was still alive, for the spirits of both mother and father lived in the son, Captain Taylor, Junior, who sailed with his father's crew in his father's stead from the old port in his schooner *Lady Fair*.

In young Taylor was all his parents' red impulse of life, their reckless daring, their urge of the unknown, their eternal questing for the fated romance and the destined measure of adventure. His was his father's tall, strong frame, the sea-blue eyes, the waves of fair hair; his was his mother's feature-casting, oval, perfectly chiselled features that in a woman meant alluring beauty, in a man the essence of virile strength. And not alone in Captain Taylor Junior did the glamour of that old romance linger but in the enmity of Jacques Beauport, an enmity switched from father to son and, if anything, growing more bitter with the years. Of Admiral Pellier himself the young Taylor lost all track, although on his voyages to Newfoundland waters in the *Lady Fair* he had stumbled on a little grave at Chateau, a grave marked MADELINE PELLIER, and knew that the admiral's last tie had snapped. But Jacques Beauport, unlike Pellier, had not been lost sight of. If the admiral had forgotten, Beauport had not forgotten. If the admiral was on the farther bulge of the earth, Beauport was ever present here.

Constantly young Taylor and Beauport came in contact and conflict, on the Labrador, on the Grand Banks, on other Newfoundland and Magdalen Islands' waters, in summer and winter, in

schooner and sealer, for Beauport was a wizard of the seasons, minting money by fishing and means more devious throughout three of those seasons and in spring captaining the steamer *Blavet* upon the floes. Treaties had been made and abrogated so many times concerning Newfoundland's shores, right had been extended and withdrawn so often that the rights of all nations were not precisely defined in many cases or were not interpreted with the same interpretation. Since ancient time a friendly wave war had smouldered among them, and wherever Captain Taylor Junior appeared Beauport made the competition bitter with personal hate. Beauport took the trouble to feed fuel to Taylor's flaming spirit, and he fanned the blaze with all the antagonism of his deep, sullen nature. It had gone on for years, lacking only the turn of events to bring about a decisive clash between the two men, and that turn of events arrived in Bay of Islands on the Terra Novan French shore. With the self-same crew that had sailed the *Graywing* in their younger days Taylor lay there with the *Lady Fair* waiting for the herring bait to school and one foggy December morning a hail from aloft apprised him that the expected schooling was at hand.

"School o' herrin', Cap'n Taylor!" the lookout at the masthead of the schooner *Lady Fair* shouted down to the fog-hidden deck below him.

"Where away, Brown?" demanded Taylor, moving his oilskinned figure in the blur of the

brownish Newfoundland sea mist and trying to stare up at his unseen lookout perched high in the clear air above the fog stratum.

"Jist off'n York Harbour thar, Cap'n. The rise o' the sun's silverin' the rovin' beggars naow. The sun'll strike us in a minnit or two, an' then ye kin see 'em aout yaonder fer yourself."

Taylor, brawniest of all his brawny crew, turned to the nearest of that crew, his mate Hughie Hay standing almost unseen at his elbow—so thick was the murk that drove and writhed inboard and outboard like a host of fat-bodied water serpents awakening with the dawn.

"Waiting a whole week, Hughie, and they couldn't school any day but Sunday!" he growled. "What do you know about that, eh?"

The mate leaned over till he felt the captain's elbow in his ribs.

"I knaow ez haow the herrin' is a plumb erratic fish, an' ez haow this seekin' o' froze bait is a plumb erratic bizness. Who on the curve o' the con-sarned waters started it, anyway?"

"Why, Captain Harry Smith of Gloucester, Hughie! Didn't you ever hear the story?"

"Kin't say ez I ever did—rightly," confessed Hughie. "I've heerd a lot o' tales o' every kind o' fish an' fishers on these coasts, but I don't remember the start o' the froze-herrin' trade among 'em."

"It was away back in '54," recounted Taylor. "That was the year of the Reciprocity Treaty

and quite a while before my time, but you ought to remember it, Hughie."

"Warn't it reciprocity give us free use o' all Bridish waters? Yep, that wuz in yer father's time, Walter—I mean Cap'n. I wuz a lump o' a lad fishin' with him aout o' Glo'ster in his schooner *Graywing*."

"Yes, that was the year. Before that we never had free use of the waters, so Captain Harry Smith came up on the south coast for halibut. He couldn't find them, so he filled up with cod and frozen-herrings and when he got home to Gloucester he sold some to three Bankers bound for the Grand Banks. It was grand bait. That's how the trade started, and that's why you and I are here this minute like blind men in a fog. It was Rose Blanche that Smith came to in the first. But Fortune Bay and Placentia Bay played out—or maybe the schools of herring developed a taste for wider roving as you hint, Hughie. Anyway, there aren't many taken except here in Bay of Islands and Bonne Bay up yonder."

Taylor nodded with a blurry nod to the northward into the blankness of the mist. Like ghosts therein they were talking, phantom man to phantom man, their voices sounding with a weird, muffled hollowness, the strangle of the rippling water on the *Lady Fair's* bows mingling with the slatting of a sail or the creaking of a sheet.

"Wonderful bait for the winter trips!" the

captain went on. "Or you may bet I wouldn't have waited here a whole week!"

"Well, mebbe we'll wait another week," lamented Hughie, trying to pierce the murk with his aged, puckered eyes. "Them Terra Novans is strict abaout their fishin' laws, an' any school o' herrin' I ever seen was too cantankerous to last over till Monday."

"By the bones of Cabot, we won't wait another day!" Taylor rapped out. "I won't stand by and see bread drift past the mouths of my men even if it is Sunday. It's a case of hard necessity, Hughie, and we can't wait. Unless it's a mighty small school and not worth bothering with. We'll know in forty crisp seconds. Here's the sun at last!"

The crimson morning sun drank up the curling vapour from the thirty-five-mile fiord of the Bay of Islands wherein they lay. First in the rugged line of the west coast they caught the soaring of Mount Blomidon's black peak over two thousand feet in air cleft with its sheer rock precipices, ribboned with its silvery hundred-foot waterfalls.

Then the lower whale-backed Laurentian hills, walled up, bulking cobalt blue against the carmine skyline, covered with moss-bearded spruce and December-yellowed birch and smeared with the amber smear of the bake apple and the scarlet flame of the partridge berry.

Buttressing the hill slopes, the sheer basaltic cliffs took form, their lichened granite faces glint-

74 THE FOAMING FORE SHORE

ing in a weird medley of colours: bronze, greenish gray, pink, and vermillion. While from the foot of the arch-hollowed, cavern-bored rim rocks, interspersed with their flat pebbled beaches, the surface of the bay unrolled like a scroll before their eyes.

Rare, matchless Mediterranean blue it shimmered, indented with three twenty-mile inland arms, the North Arm, the Middle Arm, and the Humber Arm which received the flow of the mighty Humber River, studded with countless islets and speckled with ice hummocks and the sails of the *Lady Fair* and scores of other American fishing-schooners. As the last wisp of fog off the land rolled seaward to still hang in heavy banks about Lark Harbour and South Head, the sun struck the sails, flashing from them magic colour changes with every slant of the canvas.

In many rigs the schooners rode, in the old double head-sail rig, in the more modern knock-about rig, some with topmasts, some without, Grant's *Evening Star*, Robinson's *Siren*, Gray's *Pride of Haarlem*, Fletcher's *Mary Bedford*, Thompson's *Light o' Dawn*, and all the rest up from Gloucester, Newburyport, Provincetown, Boston, and other ports, their skippers as anxious as Walter Taylor for the elusive herring to school so as to provide them with bait and as chagrined as he that they had chosen Sunday for their landward visit.

Dead ahead and a little beyond Sea Island

Taylor marked the school, for now that the mist was gone seaward it needed not the masthead and the binoculars to spot them.

The lookout Brown had descended from his perch to the deck, and he and the rest of the crew joined the mate and the captain to stare at the waters of York Harbour. Beyond the channel they saw the herring massed in a great school, packed so close that the topmost fish splashed the surface into spray.

"By Heavens, acres of them!" blurted Taylor to the crew. "And not a boat of Jacques Beauport putting off from shore, though his crews haven't taken a fin this week. By the chin whiskers of Neptune, Hughie, he has to take them as usual and sell to us or I'll take them myself. Lower a dory till I go and see him! Yes, and you may as well unlash all the dories while you're at it. I think we'll have use for them in any case."

Irish Kerrigan, Boston Jim, and Patterson sprang to the leeward nest of dories; Brown, Tom Halifax, and Scotty McCaig to the windward nest—blooded Banks men all, chafing and fretting through a week of inactivity and eager to let their pent-up energy loose in the first task that had been assigned them since making the Bay of Islands.

With deft hands they flipped off the ringbolt lashings that prevented the nested boats being swept off the deck of the *Lady Fair* in the heavy gales of the Newfoundland waters, when the schooner ran roaring torrents from stem to stern.

76 THE FOAMING FORE SHORE

"All av wan week, ye mind!" growled Irish Kerrigan. "An' divvle a hand have I put to a rope or an oar."

"Wall," snickered Boston Jim, "you've whistled fer fish till your teeth are ouden tune, and here it luks as if they've come to hear the melodee."

He and Patterson hooked on the tackles and hauled with a heave.

The topmost dory swung up and out and descended with a smack on the waters of the Bay.

"Righto, Cap'n!" they sang out. "We'll stand by with the tackles till we hear what's what!"

CHAPTER XIV

PILLARS OF THE LAW

AS TAYLOR stepped into the dory and pulled away from the *Lady Fair*, the voice of Skipper Grant hailed him from the *Evening Star*.

"Walt—ho, Walt! Where you going?"

"See Jacques Beauport!" stated Taylor between two pulls.

"No good, Walt!" Grant shook his head with a bear-like motion. "It's Sunday. Newfoundlanders won't lift a hand for Beauport to-day, and if they would Jacques wouldn't let them."

"I know," shouted Taylor, persisting in his pulling, "but maybe he'll think, like us, that he's waited long enough to make a dollar or two. I'll see him anyway and give him the chance to do it before I take the job off his hands."

Grant made a violent gesture of disapproval, walking forward along the *Evening Star's* deck to keep Taylor's dory within hearing.

"Don't you do it, Walt," he roared his advice through the megaphone of his hands. "Cruisers always snooping round. Might get you in the act. Sit tight till to-morrow—Monday."

Taylor shook his head obstinately as he rowed

on, yet in his heart he realized that Grant was right. He knew Jacques Beauport too well to expect any favour from him. The first sight of Beauport sitting smoking on the landing-stage convinced him how hollow was the observance of the usual method of seeking the frozen-herring bait.

As if expecting Taylor, Beauport sat hulked there, his dark eyes fixed upon the approaching dory, his stubble-bearded face wreathed every half minute with the smoke of his short pipe. Lying on the stages around him, leaning against the gun-wales of the beached boats or lounging in the shored-up sheds that hugged the harsh crags, were many sea-booted Newfoundlanders jacketed in homespun, canvas, or moleskin, and several Frenchmen in wrinkled cottonade trousers and faded blue jerseys.

Unlike any of these men in his employ, Beauport wore the Breton casque and sabots. Descended originally from one of the famous St. Malo fish merchants who yearly plied their trade in Newfoundland waters, long in the French Navy from whose Fishery Protection Service vessels he had deserted, and now a trade monopolist himself with a summer station on the Magdalen Islands and a winter station on Newfoundland and the Labrador he clung tenaciously to the traditions and the dress of his forefathers.

"*Bon matin, Capitaine,*" he nodded with measured malice, as Taylor nosed his boat through the

muddle of dories tied about the stages. "It is a nice sunny morning to go to church."

"Church!" exploded Taylor, wrathfully. "I'm no infidel myself, but I know when churchgoing should be let slide in a case of necessity like this. Beauport, there are men out on my *Lady Fair* and on the other schooners whose share in the cod catch means the daily bread in the mouths of their wives and little ones at home. They've lost a precious week waiting to buy frozen-herring bait from you, and——"

"How, *mon ami*?" interrupted Beauport sharply. "Can I make the herring school?"

"They have schooled. You're not blind, only mule stubborn. Are you going to take that bait and let these men get away?"

Beauport waved a deprecating hand.

"It is against the law, *Capitaine*," he puffed.

"Your law?" Taylor sneered.

"The Newfoundland fishing law. *Comment?* I appeal to *Messieurs les Terre Neuvien*s. I appeal to you, Codroy John."

Thus directly addressed, Codroy John, the bearded Newfoundlander, stony of face, with the fathomless blue eyes of a prophet, rolled over from where he lay on his elbow on the stage and sat up, his ponderous legs dangling above the water.

"Aye, it be against our law," he boomed, "and a wonderful sinful thing ye proposes, Captain Taylor."

"Oh, blazes!" groaned Taylor. "I'm not talking to you Terra Novans. I know you're religious to fanaticism. I know it's against your principles to take fish on Sunday. I'm not quarrelling with you there. But Beauport has enough of his own race here to drop a net."

"*Oui*, but I refuse, *Capitaine*," spat Beauport. "Besides—" pointing to his steamer anchored off the farther cove—"I am done with fishing here for the season and to-morrow I am taking my sealer *Blavet* to St. John's to overhaul her for the sealing trip in March. So I may not drop another net till then."

"All right, I've warned you," raged Taylor. "If there's any inquiry, you'll do the answering and take the consequences. We'll take the fish ourselves."

"*Tiens, Capitaine*," reminded Beauport, pulling himself erect upon the stage and gesturing with his pipe-stem, "Americans have not the right to take herring within the bays or harbours, and that is where you are now."

"Americans have the right," contradicted Taylor flatly. He stepped up on the seat of his dory on a level with Beauport, facing him swiftly, eye to eye. "The Reciprocity Treaty of eighteen hundred and fifty-four and the Treaty of Washington in eighteen hundred seventy-one gave it to them. Only, we've never used the right. We've always been content to buy what we needed from men like you. But, by Heaven, to-day we're going

to use our right, you cursed jack-o'-tar!" [Navy deserter.]

"Oh! You are, are you?—You *diable* son of a pirate."

Taylor's weather-bronzed face flooded a deep red.

He leaped from dory seat to landing-stage and smote as he leaped, his knotted fist catching Beauport flush upon the forehead and dropping him flat upon the boards.

The Frenchman was on his feet again like a cat, a long knife in his hand, but a dozen of his own men seized his arms and Codroy John and others of the Newfoundlanders blocked the enraged Taylor back from him.

For a moment they glared silently at each other, two strong men of the sea, Taylor six feet tall, two hundred pounds in weight, in the prime of his twenty-seven years; Beauport full twenty years his senior, but his equal in weight and strength, with the litheness and suppleness that the tiger-dike sprawl of the surges had bred in his short, thick, powerful frame.

Only an instant, then Beauport nodded blackly to the crowd of his own men who held his arms.

"Thanks, *mes amis*," he growled. "It is well you were quick enough or *Capitaine* Taylor would have taken no more fish this side of the steaming river of Hell!"

The men loosed their grip, and Beauport with a glint of his white teeth sheathed his long knife somewhere under his casque.

Codroy John and the rest of the Newfoundlanders stepped aside out of Taylor's way, and Taylor without a word slid into his dory and pulled back toward the *Lady Fair*.

With long strokes that crashed the dory through the water he pulled, the strength of the muscles set to crush Beauport, knife and all, going into the strain of the work.

Over his shoulder he glanced toward the spot where he had seen the herring schooling and glimpsed the silver shoal still sporting on the blue surface. On the stages ashore Beauport had resumed his puffing at his pipe again. Codroy John was sprawling as before, his huge body recumbent on the planks and his prophetic eyes following the retreating dory.

It seemed that the matter was decided. According to their reasoning, there remained no possibility of Taylor's getting any bait. In any event, he could not under the law get bait till the next day, and Jacques Beauport in his secret heart had determined that he should get no bait at all.

What matter to him if the men of the *Lady Fair* went home with only their salt in their hold? What matter if the men of those other Yankee schooners did the same? What matter if their wives and children did ration for a little? That *Capitaine* Taylor was rich. He could look after many wives and children with his money! As for himself, Jacques had a grudge to satisfy, and by the Virgin he swore that it should go unsatisfied no longer!

The red flush was still on Taylor's cheek as he rowed and the red wrath still in his heart. "Pirate" was an ugly word in this late day of policed Atlantic waters and "son of a pirate" was a shameful slur, and what angered Taylor so much was the fact that Beauport knew the slur was undeserved.

Undeserved, yet Beauport had used it out of bitter enmity, an enmity that dated back to Taylor's father's time, his father's romance and his father's so-called act of piracy.

North to Chateau across the Straits of Belle Isle his seething mind flew as he worked the stubby oars mechanically, to storied Chateau on the Labrador coast where thirty years before bloomed Marie Laval, slim offshoot of the exiled Acadians and the flower of the Northern coasts, Marie Laval whose blood was in his veins and who had mothered him for a period all too short.

Irish Kerrigan, Boston Jim, Patterson, Brown, Tom Halifax, and Scotty McCaig were standing by the tackles. They could not see from their distance what had occurred at Beauport's stages, but they had their own shrewd opinion of the Breton's disposition and his particular animosity toward Taylor and the *Lady Fair*. Moreover, the sight of the captain's anger-flushed face was as an open book to them.

"Aye, 'tis his father's blud that iss rioting in him!" exclaimed Scotty McCaig. "Are ye kenning yon danger-signal, men?"

"The divil's gleamin' in his eye," nodded Irish Kerrigan. "I wud not want to be takin' the thud av his fist this blessed minnit."

"We're in for action, boys," howled Tom Halifax, gleeful that his hopes promised fulfilment. "We're in for action at last. I know by the way the cap'n pulls them oars."

In anticipation he hooked on to the topmost dory of the windward nest and he and Brown poised it in the air in readiness.

"What's the word, Cap'n? Ain't that confounded Jacques Beauport goin' to let us git away? Divvil a minnit longer wud I wait for the loikes av him!" dinned a medley of voices in Taylor's ears.

Taylor looked up into their brown, excited faces. He was far off in that moment, far off at Chateau, and it took a little time to come back across the miles. He stared at them silently and at old Hughie Hay in charge of the wheel, then jumped briskly on the deck of the *Lady Fair*.

CHAPTER XV

THE SEINING

THE big seine, Hughie!" he ordered the mate. With exclamations of satisfaction several of the crew slid it over the side, eight hundred yards of hand-made, Scotch twine, freshly tarred net that sunk the dory to the gunwale.

"Now, over with your dories and set it quick. The school's in the harbour now, but it's shiftty and might move out any minute. Hughie, stay aboard with one other man. Where's Ebony? Ho—Ebony!"

At the cry a woolly-headed negro youth of twenty who had replaced the Cuban Bolero popped out of the galley.

"Yessah, Capting Taylah, heah I'se be!"

"You're the other man, Ebony. Stand by to help Hughie if you're wanted. Hughie, walk the old wagon up on us and don't ever take your hands off the wheel. You can't tell what will break."

There came the clank of the tackles as the dories nested to windward and leeward, six in all, were heaved overside, the splud-splud-splud of their flat bottoms striking the water, the rattle of the

removable thwarts being seated, the thump of bolts and oars, and the boats, each carrying a man, pulled after Taylor.

Right across the channel they stretched the long seine as Taylor paid it out and began swiftly to moor the ends fast under his exhortations.

"Bear a hand there; shuffle yourselves!" he urged as the sportive school foamed the inner reach of the water. "They'll strike and go over the headline before you—look out, here they come!"

From the inner reach of the harbour the water surged and boiled. Then with darting impact the mass of herring struck the barrier.

The seine writhed and strained, but the twine was stout, the wooden floaters on the headline extra large, the leaden sinkers on the footline extra heavy, and moreover Taylor's dory men had a firm mooring on the ends. The big net held, massing the herring thicker and thicker till the whole school came to comparative rest.

"Together now, all hands," sang out Taylor, "haul away——"

In mid-sentence he went down on the bottom boards at the crash of a dory stern into his own, and as he crawled to his knees, Beauport, Codroy John, and a score more slid by in boats.

Anathematizing them for their ruse, he groped for an oar. He had cast an eye landward when rowing into the harbour to set the net and saw Beauport smoking and the others lounging in the same spot. Only when the *Lady Fair's* crew got

into action with the seine had the Breton moved. For so rapidly had Taylor and his men worked, so smartly the school had struck that they had no time to keep further watch upon the shore. Their eyes dared not leave the herring, and the Newfoundlanders' boats had slipped out from the landing stages unnoticed.

Like a flash they had come, and like a flash they drove in on the straining seine, plowing through the startled herring school, ripping at the headline with their fishermen's knives, fending off the *Lady Fair's* dories with the oars. It was a wild scrambling with dory crashing into dory, the blue water shot with silver, fizzing all about, the herring spouting in molten jets through the torn places of the seine and the whole expanse of the harbour reverberating in the calm Sunday morning with the grinding of the gunwales, the whack of the oars, the yelling, splashing, stamping.

"The Lard should strike ye dead!" Codroy John was roaring fanatically. "The Lard should strike ye dead, breakin' His law and the law o' man as ye be!"

He laid about him with a muckle in his left hand, the while he stabbed the seine with the blade in his right, and in the dory next to him Beauport, picturesque in his fluttering casque, danced on the boat bottom till his sabots clattered and flourished the long knife he had drawn on Taylor.

"*Les diables Américains!*" he shrilled. "*Terre Neuviens pour le bon Dieu!* Cut, *mes amis*, cut!"

"You hide-bound hypocrite!" snarled Taylor, whirling his dory alongside with a vicious pull on one oar.

Beauport wheeled as Taylor straddled the touching gunwales, his bright steel blade poised in the air. Snarling something unintelligible, he sprang and struck downward in mid-spring, darting his knife for the incapacitating neck thrust. Taylor, watching the lightning flash of the steel, barely dropped his shoulders in time. The point of the blade scragged his skin; the haft in Beauport's fist struck him with a bruising thud; but his oar, held horizontally like a wand in his extended hands, crossed the Breton's hurtling body and sent him staggering back.

Then before Beauport could stab again, Taylor slid both hands together on the oar grip and crashed him senseless into his dory bottom.

As he struck, a dory manned by two Newfoundlanders banged into his own in the struggle about the net. His dory spun sharply about, widening the water gap between it and Beauport's, and Taylor, one foot in each and straddling the gap, splashed down into the Mediterranean-blue water.

When he came to the surface both craft were gone out of his reach, and the rest of the boats, unable to pay attention to anything but Beauport's dories bent upon the destruction of the costly seine, were ramming and darting over a battle line of nearly half a mile. From their own stove-in

dory the two Newfoundlanders who had collided with him and Beauport had leaped aboard the pair of drifting boats and were sculling them back into the fray.

He and Beauport had clashed near one end of the long seine, and while he paddled with his hands and jacked off his loose sea boots with his toes, he measured with a sailor's eye the distance he was away from his jammed, flailing dories. The dories were much farther away from him than the *Lady Fair*. Hughie at the wheel of the schooner had seen his plight and was yelling his genial encouragement.

"Keep a-floatin', Cap'n, keep a-floatin'," he implored with a grin as broad as a hatch. "I'll be on top o' ye in a minnit. Good thing ye ain't got diver's shoes on there, or ye'd be anchored a good many fa-athoms daown."

While he grinned and chaffed, Hughie was jibing over to meet him, so, reversing the process and treading water while he skinned his oiled sea-jacket off, Taylor struck out for the *Lady Fair*.

While he swam, he watched the turmoil raging about the net. Beauport's Frenchmen and Codroy John's Newfoundlanders outnumbered the crew of the schooner in the dories by two to one, but for all their inferiority of numbers his men were putting up a terrific battle. Their week of inactivity had frayed them till they were right on edge for just such a clash as Beauport had precipitated,

and it was their opportunity to give vent to their resentment over the tactics the Breton habitually pursued against them.

Irish Kerrigan was in his glory, whirling round and round in his floating craft, swinging right and left upon the luckless dories that happened to come within reach of his ponderous oar. Two Newfoundlanders he knocked sheer over their gunwales in a hand-to-hand fight, and two more boats he stove with pile-like drives of the handle of the oar, so that they floundered in the bay.

Tom Halifax and Brown were locked with four Frenchmen right on top of the seine, overriding the floats and threatening greater destruction to the twine than even the knives had caused.

Patterson, Scotty McCaig, and Boston Jim had loosened the farther end of the seine and were desperately endeavouring to haul it aboard, fathom by fathom, the while they rammed and battered every craft in their way. The herring were gone, but it seemed they might save the costly net if Taylor could drive the schooner in on the nearer end and clear Beauport's dories out of the path. So with a mighty effort against the drag of his soaked clothes, Taylor quickened his stroke, straining every sinew to reach the schooner which had now completed her manœuvre of coming over on the port tack.

CHAPTER XVI

IN THE "ESPERANCE'S" WAKE

A STERN of the *Lady Fair* Taylor could see the *Evening Star*, the *Pride of Haarlem*, the *Light o' Dawn*, the *Mary Bedford*, and other schooners lowering their dories in mad haste to rush aid to the *Lady Fair's* fighting crew.

Grant's *Evening Star* was the nearest vessel, and Grant, standing up and yelling belligerently, was leading a flotilla at racing speed for the line of the seine. But as Grant passed abeam of the *Lady Fair* which Taylor had not yet reached, the latter saw the *Evening Star's* captain suddenly cease yelling, rip out a string of emphatic exclamations, whirl his bunched dories, and spurt back for the *Evening Star*.

"Walt!" he howled, dismally. "Ho—Walt!"

Grant pointed frantically up the mouth of the Humber River, and Taylor turned his face in his long, plunging crawl stroke to see the gray shape of a cruiser in the great estuary.

Down from Humbermouth, some distance up the mighty sea arm and the headquarters of both French and English vessels engaged in the Fishery Protection Service, the warship had sighted the

disturbance in York Harbour and with funnel smoking was bearing straight down upon the *Lady Fair*.

Taylor had a swift vision of his father's time, of the *Graywing* seized and rotting in the harbour of St. John's, and with a shout of warning to Hughie Hay, he lunged violently through the last half-dozen strokes of his swim.

The pole-masted rig of the *Lady Fair* made it easy for her to come about without loss of time. Both jib and foresail, as well as mainsail, rigged on travellers, there was nothing to trim, and as her stern drifted past him, Taylor drew himself up over her low rail that snuggled not over two feet above the water.

"Stand ready to crack on the maintopsail, Hughie," he gasped, seizing the wheel the moment his wet, stockinged feet struck the deck. "And you, Ebony, grease that plagued whining main boom's jaws or it'll give us away!"

He whirled the *Lady Fair* over on the other tack, and like a great gull she swooped wide of the *Evening Star*, eating close into the wind.

"Giver her a humping hand-along, Walt!" yelled Grant, gleefully pounding his own rail as the *Lady Fair* heeled by. "The fog'll save you if you hit her."

"Take my men aboard, will you, Grant—fish on shares—till I see you again?" Taylor roared as he plunged past and away.

"Sure, Walt!" came back like a faint echo.

It was a matter of three miles to the edge of the fog-bank hanging over Lark Harbour and South Head, and the *Lady Fair* was skimming it as the startled sea-bird skims, filling away on the long tack, Taylor at the wheel, the chill December breeze icing his wet clothes and stiffening his fair hair. Beside stood the aged, stoop-shouldered, bow-kneed Hughie Hay waiting to set the light cloth at a word, while the coal-black cook silenced the offending main boom with a chunk of fatty pork rind.

Astern smoked the gaining cruiser, plowing the blue surface of the bay, driving nineteen knots, overhauling the *Lady Fair*, swift as she was, as if she were lying to. Yet the advantage of the *Lady Fair* lay in the start she had while the Fishery Protection Service vessel was still far up the estuary. Moreover, there was witchery in Taylor's sailing of the schooner, sorcery in the coaxing hands on her wheel, and as the schooner soared into the last mile of the close three-mile race Taylor felt the grim, triumphant conviction that he was going to win.

Beyond a doubt the commander of the cruiser thought so, too, for a signal ran up to her masthead and opened on the wind.

"Yeh!" snickered Hughie Hay. "Lay to, she sez, Cap'n. What on the curve o' the consarned waters does that feller jedge we be? A pore, lumberin' scaow?"

"We'll show him ' what we are in a minute,

Hughie," grinned Taylor, and sailed her up a fraction closer into the wind.

A puff of smoke mushroomed out from the cruiser, and a shell flung up a geyser of water two hundred feet in front of the *Lady Fair's* bows.

"Tryin' to sca're us into a fit," commented Hughie, unmoved.

"Hold hard!" warned Taylor.

Abruptly he squared away before the wind, jibing the fore and main sails over with a crash and dodging a second shell wide abeam. The *Lady Fair* leaped up bodily like a thing alive under the pressure, trampled down again upon the silken surges, and dived into the dank oblivion of the fog, clearing the South Head rocks by the scant margin of her own length.

"Crack on, Hughie!" urged Taylor.

Hughie swiftly spread the maintopsail, now that they ran before the wind. On account of the pole-masted rig of the schooner it was handled from the deck, and once it drew, Taylor felt the *Lady Fair* swing to her balance better, felt the impulsive kick of the wheel ease somewhat.

"That's grand," he chuckled, softly, turning the wheel over to Hughie Hay and noiselessly thumping his chilled feet on the deck. "Stand in as close as you can. She daren't follow us along inshore, but she's sure to scout around outside. And pray for the fog to last, Hughie. If it breaks, the *Lady Fair* is confiscated as sure as

our leach is wet. What cruiser did you make her out to be?"

"The French *Titan*, I reckon—that is, ef I weren't plumb mistook."

"Then they'll scour the whole Newfoundland waters and the Banks to boot till they find the *Lady Fair*. It isn't a few minutes' chase or a day's chase. It's a hunt to the finish, Hughie. They've been interpreting the fishing law pretty strictly of late, and they'll certainly try to make an example of this. We'll have to head her for the Gut of Canso."

"To home, Cap'n? Daown to Glo'cester eh?" asked the mate, putting his weight on the wheel to the lift and send of the flying schooner over the momentarily increasing swell.

Taylor shook his head with a movement that was scarcely discernible in the woolly pall through which they rocked. The clammy fog, death cold as it was, somehow possessed the magic of melting the ice upon his hair, and the water trickled down his face to mat upon the breast of his flannel shirt.

"No, not Gloucester, Hughie! My father tried that once, and it led to a heap of trouble. I don't know. Some nice, quiet Nova Scotian bay, I guess."

"There ain't much noise er tongue waggin' to Country Harbour," suggested Hughie.

"Yes, or maybe Musquodoboit! We'll see when we hit the Strait. It'll have to be shoal water and a place where the big steamers seldom

call. We'll lay the *Lady Fair* up there, and when she noses out again, not even the *Titan* will know her. We'll rig her up with the old schooner rig. Oh, we'll fix her over all right, if we don't smash up against something solid and *if* the fog holds. Keep her before the wind, Hughie, and drive her like the vikings. I'm off below to get on some dry clothes!"

He threw on fresh clothes and pulled new oilskins from the locker. As he made shift to get them on, the black pate of Ebony was thrust in the doorway.

"Kettle's boilin', Capting!" he grinned, "I'se make you a good hot drink to kill dat chill!"

"All right, Ebony, I'm with you! For the bay was as cold as the heart of a berg!"

CHAPTER XVII

THE MESSAGE FROM THE MAGDALENS

ALL day the *Lady Fair* sped blindly through the fog before a wind that was rising every moment. Taylor, again at the wheel, scorned to shorten sail. He drove her wing-and-wing her foresail to starboard, mainsail to port, as his father before him had driven the *Esperance* down these same wild waters, her deck boiling under to the hatches, her low rail smashing on the seas behind.

Continually the seas boarded her, great green mountains of water overcurling with a crash, foaming her from end to end. Taylor in his new set of oilskins was lashed to the wheel. Hughie Hay huddled in the freezing perch as lookout, peering for the fog to break. Ebony worked in the closed galley. So there was no unwary man about to be caught by the treacherous surges and carried overside, but the incessant sluicing scaled all the deck with dangerous ice.

It was growing colder all the while, and toward evening hail began to volley through the fog. Shortly afterward the *Lady Fair* struck a howling snow-squall and emerged from it into a clear waste

gray of storm-lashed winter waters with no loom of land in sight.

"The Magdalen Islands must be somewhere to starboard, Hughie, according to my reckoning!" Taylor roared. "Can you pick out the light?"

"No," Hughie screamed through the creaking of the sheets and the roaring of the canvas. "Nothin' showin', Cap'n. Though it's plumb useless my eyes be against yon buckshot snow."

Yet ten minutes later his shout came down.

"Bird Rocks Light, ho!"

"Where away, Hughie?"

"On the starb'ord quarter. Must 'a' bin a squall a-tween."

"Good sea eye, Hughie!" lauded Taylor. "Then we're well clear of anything solid. Came down to eat and get some of Ebony's steaming tea before I raise you St. Paul's Island light."

Well fortified by a good meal and a bucketful of hot tea, Hughie went aloft once more in the wintry dusk and scanned the darkening seas.

"Sail, ho!" he announced after a time in a discordant bellow. "Dead ahead!"

"What do you make her, Hughie?" Taylor demanded.

"Great Scott, you're crazy, Hughie! A catboat out in this sea! Or is it your peppered eyes! Look some better."

"She's not over-la-arge jest the same, and—er—no, raft, by gun! No—no, somehow I can't ca'late—ye-es, I got her. By the razeed

schooners o' the Banks, a barr'l, a herrin' barr'l with sail a-top!"

He came tumbling down in the excitement of his discovery and joined Taylor.

"What on the curve o' the consarned waters does it mean, Cap'n?" he yelped.

"Something's wrong with someone, Hughie," Taylor concluded. "They don't float those things hereabouts for fun. But I can't heave to now without setting storm trysail on the main. You and Ebony'll have to fish her as we go. Stand by with a rope. Ho, Ebony, come out here and lend a hand. And both of you watch out for seas!"

Over the *Lady Fair's* buried nose, only a few fathoms away, they could see the barrel tossing, the frozen spray rattling on the tin sail that Hughie Hay had mistaken in the distance for the canvas of a tiny catboat. It appeared as if Taylor must run it down and trample it to atoms under the keel of his plunging schooner, but suddenly Hay and Ebony, clutching the iced rail with the rope ready to cast, felt the vessel ease in her flight. The deafening roaring went out of her sails as she began to swing on her heel. Over, over she went till the lee rail was buried, the ocean boiling about their waists, but such was the cunning of the hand on the wheel that they beheld the barrel rising to meet them even as they dipped.

"Cast!" yelled Taylor.

Each clinging with one hand, swinging the rope overhead with the other, they snapped the loop

about the sail-rigged barrel, and on the instant Taylor snapped the *Lady Fair* back on her course, whirling her in the quarter of her arc. The schooner righted and leaped ahead like an unleashed hound, while the barrel came sliding in-board, overbalancing Hay and Ebony and riding them across the slippery deck to the weather rail.

"Tain't a herrin' barr'l after all," announced Hughie, kicking off its armour-plate of ice. "It's a m'lasses barr'l."

"Take the wheel a minute, Ebony, till I open," Taylor ordered.

He procured an ax from the galley, carefully pounded in the head and pulled away the boards.

"Lobster tins!" he muttered, gravely. "Sealed! Looks like a last message, Hughie."

Then as he pried the tins open with his knife and drew out letters contained therein, his tone changed.

"By Jove, no, they're from the Magdalen Islands," he cried in surprise. "The cable's broken. They've no communication with the mainland, and they've set this adrift to let the mainland know what's up and what supplies to send on the supply boat when she makes her first run."

"It ain't some fool's trick, be it?" demanded the cautious mate.

"No, it's no fool's hoax," declared Taylor. "For that message is signed: 'Mademoiselle Madeline Boucher for M. le Boucher'."

"Well, who's Boucher?"

"Head of the Telegraph Service on Amherst Island. I've heard his name often. Yes, Hughie, and I've heard of Mademoiselle Madeline, too, though I've never seen her."

"An' what abaout her?" frowned Hughie.

"Most beautiful girl on these coasts, they say," laughed Taylor. "What do you know about that? For here she's floated a little God-sent message to us, Hughie!"

Hughie's frown deepened. He was afraid of women and shunned them with a consistency that always made him the object of Taylor's banter.

"Meanin' haow?" he questioned.

"Meaning haow?" echoed Taylor with mischievous eyes as he quickly restored the letters to the tins before the spray could wet them. "It wouldn't be gentlemanly of me, Hughie, not to heed a letter from the prettiest girl on Northern coasts. It's not Musquodoboit for us after all. It's the Magdalen Islands. We'll get in some sail and come about. It's a bad blow, but I think the *Lady Fair* will stand it. She's a tough old schooner, and she'll turn over before her sticks will go."

CHAPTER XVIII

THE WRECK OF THE "LADY FAIR"

HUGHIE HAY stared at him calculatingly, the while he performed the trick of replacing the letters in their receptacle.

"Haow you choosin' them islands?" he demanded, finally.

"Why shouldn't I choose them?" countered Taylor, whimsically. "Didn't I tell you I can't ignore this message from the deep?"

"But," drawled Hughie, "getting daown to brass tacks, I dunno as you should resk it, Cap'n. I ain't noways fond o' them dark waters myself, and I vote for Musquodoboit or Country Harbour still."

"But the Magdalens are better," Taylor pointed out. "The steamers run there only in summer. No quieter place in the world, now that the cable's broken. No better place in the world to lay the *Lady Fair* up till we make her over. This is what the imaginative call a sending, Hughie, and we'd be perfectly formed fools not to take advantage of it."

"They ain't got the wireless service in there yet, have they?" ventured Hughie, still frowning at the thought of Madeline Boucher.

"No, though they're talking of installing soon," Taylor told him.

"An' the m'lasses barr'l?"

"We'll certainly let it drift as it was doing. With these currents and winds it can't miss the mainland. It'll be picked up somewhere on the coast inside of a week or ten days. If it should miss by any chance and if there should be any danger of want on the Islands, why, we'll be there with the *Lady Fair* to carry out a message ourselves before the winter ice packs in. That's logic, isn't it?"

"I dunno," returned Hughie, disclaiming all responsibility with a shrug of his stooped shoulders. "Mebbe it be, an' then ag'in mebbe it be a young man's consarned foolishness."

"So," smiled Taylor, the mischievous light in his eyes deepening, "you'd better take the tins below, Hughie, and seal them up again. Then you and Ebony may head them in the barrel once more and drop the barrel overside. Only see that the tin sail's fastened on tightly so that it will get the full steering force of the breeze."

Within five minutes the mate and the cook released the flotsam they had salvaged, the wind catching the sail and spinning the barrel slowly abeam.

"Now, Ebony, take the wheel again," Taylor ordered, "while Hughie and I get in some of this sail."

With vicious fisting of the wet, icy canvas and sheets they furled the maintopsail, put a reef in the foresail, a double reef in the main, and the

Lady Fair breathed herself and came about. Then with the jibing of the fore and main and the backing over of the jib she slanted off on the tack for the Magdalen Islands.

The wind instead of falling was increasing with the dusk. The *Lady Fair's* lee rail was hidden in a swirl of foam. Her dim masts created the illusion of lying on the roll of the surges. The slant of her deck stood steep as a stairway. But it was not a long run, and Taylor knew to an ounce what his vessel would bear. He had no doubt that the full gale that was blowing would soon be a howling hurricane compelling him to lie to under foresail and jib or jib alone if he did not promptly reach shelter.

For it was the wildest season of the year in a waste of waters noted for their wildness, and nowhere did the savage sweep of the Gulf rollers rage so demoniacally as round the approaches to the Magdalen group, approaches surrounded by unmarked reefs, deceptive currents, tide-ripped channels, lurking quicksands, and treacherous, shifting shoals.

Soon they caught the loom of the cliffs and the lines of the shoals, black as ink under the starlight and frothed with foam, moaning sand-bars miles in length, eery sounding-boards of the sea.

Then against the pale green night sky loomed the rounded dome of a hill.

"There's La Grande Demoiselle Hill, Hughie," Taylor nodded as he steered, "and there's La Petite Demoiselle. Yonder are the beach lights,

WRECK OF THE "LADY FAIR" 105

too. But, by Heavens, there's something else, and big. Look—off Entry Island!"

Hay and Ebony turned to stare, and the sight for the moment froze them in their tracks. Off Entry an immense wall of water was rearing up and bearing down upon them, a wall that was patently a combination of current, surge and tide and yet not this so much as the chaos of opposing seas. An erratic shift of the wind had thrown a big roller into the face of the roller raised in its previous course, and, one pyramiding upon the other as they came, the mountain of water reared thirty feet in the air above the schooner.

For the *Lady Fair* there was no avoiding it. Taylor dared not swerve the vessel a point in her course, for hard ahead opened the channel between Entry and Amherst islands, deep at high tide but holding only about three fathoms at low and not of so great a width that one could gamble with death on reef or bar. With sails straining like the pinions of a sea-bird that the next moment must be dashed against a cliff, the schooner darted for the entrance, the three on deck gripping against the coming shock and staring up into the bore of water shining dull jade under the stars.

Like a tidal wave it caught her in the entrance. Taylor saw the overcurl break in a frothy snarl. Then the mass thundered and crashed on deck.

With a breath-quenching, pulverizing impact he went down upon the planks, one hand clinging to the spokes of the wheel, his body pounded and

thrashed over its every square inch, whirling about his one clenched hand as a leaf is whirled on its stem, his arm nearly wrenched from its socket.

Every moment, too, his lungs half full of water and bursting for breath, he felt the *Lady Fair* sink, sink till with a jarring thud she struck the channel bottom, bared by the pouring waterfall like a shallow pool bared by the stream from an emptying pail. Broadside on in the trough, swept by both wind and sea, the schooner staggered and rolled and, her hatches still holding, creepingly began to rise.

Instantly with her uplift the jib split like a gunshot in Taylor's water-deafened ears. Fore and main sails disintegrated with twin thunderclaps. The splintered masts sagged after them, both gaffs smashed down upon the deck, while both booms peaked up weirdly as the *Lady Fair* keeled over with the slow bellying of a dying whale.

As she keeled, Taylor, still clinging to the broken wheel, emerged from the lather, catching the blessed air with a sobbing sound, shaking the brine from his eyes as a dog shakes his bedraggled head.

In the dim starlight he saw that he had the careening deck to himself. Hughie Hay and Ebony both were gone!

Also he glimpsed the crescent shore of Amherst not fifty yards away, the flicker of lights and dark figures running, before the *Lady Fair* flipped bottom-up, swept in a long curve to the crest of a roller, and was spewed in the air to crash bodily on the beach.

CHAPTER XIX

WHEN THE EBB TIDE FLOWS

THE stupendous seas had broken her back on the channel bottom, and though her sturdy hatches had stubbornly refused to be battered in, now the terrific thud upon the sands crumpled her to pieces. Like a deal box the schooner collapsed, and her timbers commenced to spin off-shore again on the outrun of the hammering waves.

Taylor, nearly smothered with the fresh submerging, shaken almost unconscious by the fall upon the beach, dimly sensed himself entangled in the wreckage of the mainmast and main boom and felt the wreckage sliding seaward. He willed to roll clear, but his numbed nerves could not communicate the impulse to his muscles, and it seemed to him that he must float out and eternally be cradled upon the Atlantic's breast as his father before him had been cradled; as stoop-shouldered, bow-kneed Hughie Hay and coal-black, woolly-headed Ebony were cradled even now.

It seemed an easy death, to float by night into nothingness. He ceased willing his obstinate limbs to move and relaxed, his faculties lapsing for a

moment to stir again at the stinging pain of spurting sand in his ear. The spurt of sand flew from a running foot that he could hear quite close to his head, and the next instant, just as the waters sucked at his legs, he felt a slim pair of arms slip about his shoulders, soft, warm, girlish arms that dragged his heavy weight partially back from the ebb.

"Quick, father!" came a girlish voice that somehow in its warmth and softness seemed to match those soft, warm arms. "Help me! He is the only one, it seems, and he is too heavy for me with the slippery oilskins and boots on."

Taylor heard sturdier feet in the sand, felt vicious spurts all over his face. Two big rough arms were clasped round him under those of the girl, and he knew he was being carried up the beach toward the flicker of lights.

He revived somewhat under the handling, and in a detached way he noted other figures about the sands. Some crowded along round his rescuers, all talking at once in both English and French, while others were scattered down the shoreline peering after the last of the drifting wreckage and crying to each other in shrill tones above the shriek of the wind.

It appeared to be some sort of evening gathering, no doubt an after-church gathering, for the people for the most part were young and neatly dressed, and through the open doorway of the house, where several older heads looked out, came

WHEN THE EBB TIDE FLOWS 109

the sonorous baritone of a phonograph that someone had forgotten to turn off, singing:

I shall come home when the ebb tide flows;
Go where I may, there is One who knows;
Fierce though the gale,
I shall prevail;
I shall come home when the ebb tide flows.

The older heads withdrew to make way, and Taylor, blinking his wet eyes under the lamp-glare, found himself being carried across the large kitchen of the house. He realized now that the evening gathering was a Sabbath evening recital in which the blaring phonograph played a loud part. The floor was cleared of rugs and covered with benches and chairs in rows and also ranged round the walls. High on a table across one end perched the big brass-horned phonograph with the operator's chair beside and the records lying on it as they had been left.

With an odd power of brain-registering he saw those things without seeming to see them, marked the comfortable plainness of the kitchen, the large pictures on the walls, lithographs of the Intercolonial and Prince Edward Islands Railway and of various fishing vessels at sea. Then he passed into a darker bedroom off the kitchen where the man who carried him laid him upon the floor, stripped away his wet oilskins and clothes, rubbed him vigorously as he lay, and thrust him into the blankets on the bed.

Apparently it was the cold which had been

spurring his senses to wakefulness, for with the cozy contact of the blankets his consciousness momentarily lapsed and he drowsed deeply, rather than swooned, in his warm coverings. When he opened his eyes again, he missed the sound of the phonograph, but a dim light burned on a chest of drawers beside the bedroom doorway, and within the circle of light the man stood waiting, gesturing and hastening with urgings in French the preparation of a steaming decoction upon the stove outside in the kitchen.

Of medium height and build, Taylor appraised him, but strong notwithstanding, for he had carried Taylor's two hundred inert pounds easily into the house. He was dressed in plain, neat black broadcloth in the shoulders of which lurked the squareness of military bearing. From his brown-bearded face his brown eyes gazed out under heavy brows, sharp eyes, clear, scrutinizing, with a far-away focus that suggested habitual staring into mighty distance.

A striking man, educated, something other than the Island fisherman, Taylor judged, and the sudden appearance of his daughter in the doorway as he stepped aside confirmed the judgment. Those slim, soft, warm arms which had slipped round him on the beach were outstretched before her, gleaming white as she came holding a pewter tray with cup and saucer and a pot of steaming coffee that smote Taylor's nostrils with a delightful fragrance.

The body that glided behind the tray was such as he had dreamed might have belonged to the

owner of the arms—lithe, slender, with a grace and softness in movement that reminded him of the ripple of summer seas. Clothed in a tan dress of some filmy material with a laced bodice that betrayed the swell of her breasts and the milky neck above, dress and figure rippled as one while she crossed to the side of his bed.

The steaming tray had all but hidden her face as she moved, but now as she set the tray upon a chair, Taylor caught sight of her features and drew a long breath of amazement. He had heard many tales of her beauty along the gossiping coasts, but he had never imagined such allurements as this. She was fair yet with a fairness that shone as a foil against his own blondness, her hair dun colour like the seaweed and with every glint and undulation of the seaweed twining in the sunny surges, waving low over ears and the nape of her neck to a loosely pinned knot of gold.

In no detail could he dissociate from her that inherent suggestion of the summer sea. Her eyes were of the sea, Mediterranean blue as the Bay of Islands he had left that morning, and from the corners of her carmine lips the full curves of her cheeks were like the creamy rose that the sea-fog paints in the sunset.

"Ah, monsieur," she smiled, meeting his open eyes, "you are feeling stronger already? But drink this quickly while it is hot. There is nothing like coffee for exposure. No—no, don't talk a word till you drink!"

CHAPTER XX

THE SONG OF THE MAGDALENS

TAYLOR took the cup from the tapering hand, stainless as foam, and emptied it not once but three times of the hot, stimulating liquid.

"*Merci, mademoiselle,*" he breathed heavily, "*et merci aussi pour ma vie!*" (and thanks also for my life.)

"You speak French?" she cried, surprised and pleased.

"Yes, my mother was French," he informed her. "My name is Taylor, Walter Taylor, captain of the lost Gloucester schooner *Lady Fair*."

"Ah, Captain Taylor, I am sorry for you, for your vessel and for your crew. And I, my name is Madeline Boucher. This is my father, M. le Boucher of the Island Telegraph Service."

She took her father by the arm as he appeared in the doorway and came to the side of the bed.

"Captain Walter Taylor, father! His boat was the Gloucester fishing schooner *Lady Fair*."

Monsieur le Boucher seemed to be gazing at him across a great distance with those sharp, clear, scrutinizing, far-focused brown eyes. It was a full minute before he spoke.

"Ha!" he sighed at last, slowly putting out his hand, "it is a bad misfortune, Captain Taylor. What waters were you fishing?"

"The west coast of Newfoundland," Taylor informed him.

"Ah, a bitter shore, the French shore! Had you a full crew on the *Lady Fair*?"

"Only two aboard besides myself, thank Heaven!"

"What, Captain Taylor?" cried Madeline commiseration, apprehension springing into her eyes "The rest were in the dories?"

"Yes, they were in the dories, but they're safe enough," Taylor hastened to assure her. "You see they boarded the *Evening Star* belonging to Grant, another Gloucester man."

"Then that was good," she rejoiced earnestly. "It is not as bad as I feared. Though the loss of a fine schooner and two men is bad enough! The storm is terrible. Hear how the wind roars overhead!"

"It wasn't the strength of the wind that wrecked me," he pointed out. "I knew how hard it was blowing and made all allowances, but it was a shift that caught me in an impossible place before I could get into the shelter of the harbour. It pyramided two opposing seas, you understand, and they swept the *Lady Fair* like a tidal wave. Would you believe it? Her keel was on the bare channel bottom."

Monsieur Boucher nodded solemnly.

114 THE FOAMING FORE SHORE

"I believe you," he concurred. "I myself have seen more than one channel bared by the wind alone about the shores of our islands. It was a miracle you escaped. Do you feel at all chilled now? Have some more coffee!"

"No, thanks, not just now," declined Taylor. "It was splendid coffee, and I drank three cups. It has chased the chill, and my veins are like fire under the hot stimulant and your gentle rubbing."

"So?" demanded Boucher, his heavy eyebrows elevating whimsically. "You felt the touch of my soft hands?"

"Yes," grinned Taylor, "and they gripped like a Turkish towel."

"*Voilà*, then," laughed Boucher, "keep the blankets to your chin. You will be all right by morning, though there is no knowing when you can send word to Gloucester or get away from the Islands. You see the cable has broken in the heavy seas, and there is no communication with the mainland. We have floated a message offshore, but only *le bon Dieu* knows when it will be picked up or when the winter storms will subside to let the Pictou steamer cross or make possible the repairing of the cable."

"Ah—hah!" nodded Taylor, non-committally.

"Thus," Boucher went on, "you are our guest for an indefinite period. There is not a great deal of excitement in the Islands during the winter, but we try to keep up as much social intercourse and entertainment as possible. Yonder is a sample of the way we lighten a dreary time."

He waved a hand toward the kitchen where the young people who had searched the beach were seating themselves again in rows upon the benches and chairs.

"They are waiting for your song, Madeline," he reminded his daughter, gently touching her arm. "Tell them Captain Taylor is quite well and then go on and sing to them as you promised. Yes, take the tray with you out of the way. I shall sit on the chair beside Captain Taylor and talk to him."

When Madeline was gone, Boucher dropped into the seat beside the bed and drew a short pipe from his pocket.

"Your own pipe is here, Captain. It fell out of your clothes. And here is my tobacco to fill if you wish."

"Thanks," accepted Taylor, "I think I shall."

He lit up and lay on his side, puffing with avidity. Boucher's pipe also was wreathing his head in smoke, and now that he smoked he appeared to have forgotten his intention to talk. His far-focused eyes gazed idly out through the doorway into the kitchen where Taylor's own eyes were fixed.

There the waiting people were all expectantly watching Madeline as she came out, some of the men in black or blue clothes, some in homespun, the women in dresses that ranged from modern to ancient. The prettiest garment he saw was Madeline's filmy creation. There were others

descending a long scale of fashions which even his mannish eyes recognized as outlandish in this day of ever-changing modes. And there were still others, maidens' costumes of an old, old period, kirtles of many colours, red, blue, purple, and green with contrasting coloured bodices and white Normandy caps upon the wearers' heads. Dressed as their Acadian grandmothers, as their Norman great-grandmothers, they posed picturesque as a painting on the long rows of rough seats under the glare of the lamps.

In an aisle left up the centre Taylor could see Madeline making her way to the front where perched the big phonograph. She was pausing every foot or so to answer the whispered questions which he knew concerned his own condition, his identity, and the identity of his schooner. To the landsman it might have been a shock to see the gathering go back so quickly to where they had left off, but not to Taylor. Too often had he seen the hungry ocean gulp down the comrades by his side to be smitten with any wonderment, and as it was with him, so it was with these Islanders.

Wrecks in the sailing season were daily cast upon their shores, sometimes storm-blown barks from the outer seas and sometimes the boats of their own Island fishers, and men were gone in a moment from their midst. It was not that they failed to care or that their hearts were not warm, but that they had seen the Atlantic take its toll so often. If they halted their lives for mourning

every time mourning was in the air, they would have no time left for living.

So they resumed their recital under Taylor's eyes that followed the figure of Madeline gliding to the front while he pondered on the strange message from her hands that had brought him to her. She picked up a guitar from its case under the table that held the phonograph, nestled it like a loved thing against her supple body, and softly struck some opening chords. All her movements, like her walk, held the liquid run and sway of tiny wavelets, and Taylor's admiration gleamed in his eyes behind the drifting screen of smoke. As she opened her lips and lifted a rich contralto voice to her own accompaniment in the "Song of the Magdalens," his admiration deepened, for it was a trained voice, wonderfully true and powerful that swelled in the words:

Seething the billows, fleecy the foam,
 Deep and strong is the swell;
 Over the wild of our ocean home
 Rings the warning wave-washed bell;
 Roaring the wind and the thunders loud;
 Ragged the lightning that splits from the cloud,
 But we rest secure for we trust His will
 Till we hear His whisper "Peace, be still"—
 Till we hear His whisper "Peace, be still."

"By Jove, where did she get that training, learn to sing like that?" whispered the astonished Taylor in the pause before the refrain.

"In Quebec," Boucher whispered back. "She

118 THE FOAMING FORE SHORE

has spent a good deal of time there with the schools
and the music. Hush!"

Lo, the loud sea is our cradle,
Swung by the tempest's blast;
O'er us His wings in shelter He flings
Till the raging storm be past.
And we rest asleep in the heart of the deep
While the Lord is here beside,
While the Lord is here beside.

Through her voice the harmonious power of wind
and sea seemed to breathe into Taylor's ears. He
felt the smite of the storm and smelled the tang
of the salt spray, but abruptly in the second verse
the timbre of her tone changed to slumberous,
golden mellowness.

Peaceful the waves and the stars do shine
Over the laughing sea;
Playful the spray and so sweet the brine
As it blows its kiss to me.
Hushed is the storm and the thunders cease;
The sea is at rest and my soul at peace;
And the night wind's breath is a soft caress
Like the hand of God put forth to bless,
Like the hand of God put forth to bless.

Lo, the low sea is our cradle,
Rocked by our Father's hand;
O'er us His wings in shelter He flings
While His angels round us stand.
And we rest asleep in the heart of the deep
For the Lord is here beside,
For the Lord is here beside.

Truly it was the "Song of the Magdalens," Taylor thought as Madeline ceased and glided into a seat while the gathering hummed with appreciation, the song of the imprisoned in the heart of the St. Lawrence Gulf, the epitome of the Islanders' lives, and truly she herself was the Goddess of the Gulf. His admiration gleamed more brightly in his eye, and Boucher must have caught it even behind the screen of smoke, for he leaned over and tapped the Gloucester man upon the shoulder.

"A word of caution in season, Captain Taylor," he spoke softly in the seclusion of the room. "It is not that I think you young enough to fall in love at first sight, second sight, or, for that matter, the hundredth sight, but the thing has happened before. Several Americans have come here, some artists, some litterateurs, some pleasure rovers, and all of them made me much trouble with their fancies before they could be persuaded to go away. I mention it so that the wind which blew them here may not blow you along the same air lane. *Comprenez-vous?* Madeline will marry one of her own race. There is no engagement with any one, you understand. I am a man who does not believe in engagements, but it is tacitly understood."

"Then the man of your own race is a lucky man," observed Taylor, his eyebrows drawing together in a frown and his lips gripping his pipe-stem firmly as he searched the gathering for one whom he might conceive to be her favoured.

"He is not here to-night," continued Boucher,

evenly, shrewdly interpreting Taylor's glance. "In fact, he is not on the Magdalens at present. It is only in summer that he is here, and sometimes in the spring. And now that I think of it, that is another chance that we may be able to establish communication with the outside world. I did not think to mention it till this moment. That is the spring sealing. The man I speak of owns a steamer and will be sailing from St. John's for the Gulf in March. Nothing is certain, you remember, but there is a chance. He has interests here as I said, and if the hunt for the seal herds brings him anywhere near the shores of the Magdalens, I have no doubt but he may call."

"And his name?" questioned Taylor, swiftly, his teeth biting hard on the amber.

"Jacques Beauport. His steamer is the *Blavet*."

CHAPTER XXI

TRAPPED

EVEN as Boucher uttered the words, Taylor's eyes caught a movement of the closed kitchen door. Without the ceremony of a knock it swung open, suddenly framing two figures in the doorway, and Taylor stared in sheer amazement at Jacques Beauport and Lieutenant Grande of the French cruiser *Titan*.

Madeline Boucher gave a little startled cry, echoed by members of the gathering. She stood up in their midst, while Boucher himself got up swiftly from his seat beside Taylor's bed and launched himself through the bedroom doorway.

"Talk of *le diable!*" he greeted with nervous excitement. "Jacques, I had just spoken your name. Tell me how you and Lieutenant Grande come this way like ghosts out of the dark."

"Why, easily, my dear Boucher," grinned Beauport, unbuttoning his heavy outer coat so that the lamplight fell upon his Breton casque and the sea boots which had replaced his sabots. "We came in a charette [two-wheeled cart] from Grindstone. *Tiens*, I suppose the wind prevented you hearing the wheels!"

"Then the *Titan* is at Grindstone?" asked Madeline, making her way through the staring people to her father's side to add what Taylor thought a none too effusive greeting.

"No, Madeline, not the *Titan* but the *Blavet*," bowed Beauport, his glance lingering on her boldly and sweeping on to Taylor lying smoking within the bedroom. "How, you ask? It all has to do with Captain Taylor yonder. The *Titan* ran aground on a rock outside the Bay of Islands while she chased the schooner *Lady Fair* for breaking the Newfoundland fishing law in seining herring on Sunday. It will take tugs from St. John's to pull her off, so Lieutenant Grande requisitioned my steamer to continue the chase."

"So far, so good, Beauport!" Taylor challenged loudly. "But kindly explain how in the world you knew I was here."

"*Comment?* Can you ask?" laughed Beauport, maliciously. "The *Blavet* is a fast steamer. We judged you would head for the Strait of Canso, and all the time I think we were not far behind you in the fog. At evening it cleared, and south of the Bird Rocks we thought we sighted your sail, but *voilà*, what do you imagine it was? A tin sail upon a floating barrell!"

"Our message to the mainland!" exclaimed Madeline.

"*Oui*," Beauport nodded, "and when we pulled it in and opened it, we saw that someone had opened it ahead of us. Ho! Ho! Is there any

need to say more? What fugitive from the law would miss such a chance of seclusion? And what man in these waters would ignore a message from your own hand, Madeline?"

Again his bold eyes lingered on the girl, though she, her own eyes gazing at Taylor, failed to meet his ardent glance.

"Thus," he continued, "I let the message float on its way. I put about in the *Blavet*. I am here and—well, Lieutenant Grande does the rest."

"Yes, I am sorry, Captain Taylor, but I ask Magistrate Boucher for your arrest, you understand," announced Lieutenant Grande stepping forward briskly in his naval uniform and fixing brilliant, gray, protruding eyes upon Taylor under the stiff peak of his cap. "There's no use asking about the *Lady Fair*, I take it, seeing you where I do?"

"No use," answered Taylor. "If you want to seize her, you'll have to dive to the bottom and comb a good many miles of stormy sea."

"Very well, but you're still here, Captain, and tomorrow I'll take you back to St. John's if you don't mind," Grande informed him with a droll smile.

"Oh, don't get it into your head that I mind that!" laughed Taylor, enigmatically. "Even if it's an ill turn you've done me, you've done these Islanders a good turn in coming. Isn't that so, Miss Madeline?"

"Yes," she smiled, "the *Blavet* is now the link between us and the outside world, and I do not

think my father will be slow to take advantage of it. Will you, father?"

"My goodness, no, Madeline, I will not be slow!" declared her father. "I have no doubt about our message eventually reaching the mainland, but we must not wait for that now. You and I must sail on the *Blavet* also. At St. John's I can get into touch by cable with Halifax and Pictou. Then I will know what can be done about getting my service into working order. As for you, Captain Taylor," turning to the Gloucester man, "I am sorry about these complications. Permit me to apologize for having misfortune overtake you in my own house."

He nodded courteously and conducted Beauport and Grande on to the glowing stove to take off their outer coats, warm themselves, and imbibe some of the steaming coffee which still stood upon the lids.

Before she passed on behind them to fulfil the duties of hostess, Madeline lingered a moment in the doorway of Taylor's room and came to his side.

"I'm sorry, too," she told him, smilingly putting out her hand. "You don't look like a hunted criminal, and you mustn't think we regard you as one. There is always trouble over the fishing regulations here on the Magdalens as well as on Newfoundland. Won't you tell me just how it happened?"

So in a few terse sentences Taylor recounted the clash in the Bay of Islands and the coming of the *Titan*.

"But we have the right to take herring in the harbours," he concluded. "That's one of the controversial points they're going to thresh out at The Hague shortly, and you'll see we will win."

"That would let you clear, then," she pondered sweetly, "except for a fine for breaking the Sunday law—and breaking it in a good cause, at that. But you should have gone back to your own soil. You would have been safer there, I think. What possessed you to choose the Magdalen group? The seclusion, as Jacques Beauport suggested?"

"No," answered Taylor, gallantly meeting her eyes, "any mainland port would have suited me better for that part. It wasn't the seclusion. It was your message, your written name, and what I had heard of you."

"Ah!" she breathed in delicious confusion, "Captain Taylor had heard of me before?"

"Yes, as the Goddess of the Gulf," he confessed, recklessly. "It was what I had heard of you that brought me, and—please let me say I'm glad of my choice of refuges, even if it hasn't been entirely unsuspected. You see, romance isn't dead in this world yet, and what man with a particle of romance in his heart would have refused to respond to that tide-borne message of yours?"

A sudden flame leaped to her cheeks. Sweet Heaven, no, romance that her awakening woman's heart ever quested was not dead in the world! Here it was a living, colourful thing, come across

stormy seas to her, and here was a man to stir the heart of romance in any woman and send the red to her cheeks!

"Are you glad, too?" Taylor whispered, unconsciously pressing the hand he still retained.

"I—ah!—sweet Heaven, how should I know so soon, Captain Taylor?" she evaded tantalizingly. "If I am to be glad, I must be made glad. *Voilà*, there is a woman's tangling tongue for you! But this much I will tell you: I am glad you are not down yonder in the cold green waters among the sunken ribs of the *Lady Fair*!"

CHAPTER XXII

THE HAZARD OF THE FLOES

THE charette was the only form of Island transport, so shortly after noon of the next day, seated in the quaint two-wheeled, wooden carts, guiltless of any springs, they drove over the pounded sands and oozing quicksands to Grindstone Island.

With wonderful celerity the news of the wreck of the *Lady Fair* and the coming of the *Blavet* had flashed throughout the length and breadth of the Magdalens. Upon the Grindstone wharf and the red, rounded hills beside, an immense crowd was assembled to pass a word of welcome with the *Blavet's* crew and cheer her as she sailed.

Out of thirteen main islands in the group, nine of them had precarious sand-bar connections when the tide was out, and from Amherst, Grindstone, Wolf, Grosse, East, and Coffin, people had foregathered here. The hurricane had blown itself out at dawn, and over from Entry and Alright islands, lying off the Main String, others had come by boat across the channels.

It seemed that the whole population of the Magdalens was present, their one thousand English,

128 THE FOAMING FORE SHORE

their six thousand Acadians, every one from L'Anse à la Cabane to Grand Entry. They almost hid the hulk of the *Blavet* lashed to the pier, a modern, massive steel steamer of the ice-breaker type with crow's-nest perches lashed to both fore and main masts and all her pennants flying.

As the charettes rumbled along the wharf to her side, the crowd divided, opening up a lane to stare curiously from two sides upon Taylor and Grande or to nod greetings to Beauport, Boucher, and his daughter. They knew Jacques Beauport well, for he purchased the bulk of their harvest of the deep, and Boucher they knew even better. Besides being in charge of the Island Telegraph Service, he was more important than the most important man in Havre Aubert the capital. Well-educated persons were scarce in the Magdalens, and when one was found the Islanders heaped offices upon him with cumulative effect. Boucher was their magistrate, postmaster, notary, registrar, and a dozen other things.

For him they had a vast respect and a vaster homage for his daughter. That she was the most beautiful woman in the Islands they all concurred. Some whose good fortune it had been to travel beyond the shores of the Magdalens vowed that nowhere had they seen one nearly so fair, neither in Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, Quebec, nor Newfoundland. Also, they vaguely guessed that some day, sooner or later, she would perhaps marry that lucky, wealthy Jacques Beauport,

who now led her so proudly upon the deck of his own ship.

"*Très bien*, Codroy John," Beauport ordered his first mate who held the bridge, "cast off and get under way. We must be clear of this pack ice before dark. I will be with you in a moment when I have shown my passengers their cabins."

With pardonable pride Beauport conducted them to the officers' quarters which, the *Blavet* being built to run in the coast passenger service in the closed season for seals, boasted good accommodation. His own cabin he assigned to Madeline, Codroy John's to Boucher, and the second mate's to Lieutenant Grande and Taylor whom it was as well to keep together while they slept although there was to be no restriction imposed on Taylor's movements when on deck. Then, leaving them to arrange the cabins to suit themselves, he hurried up to take over the command from Codroy John.

All lines had been cast off, and the sealer was backing and swinging from the wharf, her siren blowing, her pennants crackling, her deck and rigging lined with her cheering crew, while from the Grindstone wharf and hills seven thousand throats answered her back shout for shout, till she was well beyond voice range.

Ahead of her as far as the eye could reach lay heavy field ice brought down by the strong Gulf winds from the Strait of Belle Isle. Close-packed it lay, a ghostly stretch, spotted with oc-

casional slack ice, bathed blood-red by the ruddy westering sun and pierced by the castellated towers of emerald bergs. A dangerous field it lurked, if a rising wind should start to raft it, and Beauport at once brought all his weapons into play to force a passage through to open water which his lookout in the crow's-nest caught with the glasses many miles away.

With poles, hawsers, and dynamite the *Blavet's* crew fought the weighty floes, squeezing, wedging, ramming a way through, but it was slow work to drop Hospital Cape astern and forge along the North Beach in a line almost parallel with the shores of Wolf and Grosse islands. The sun had gone down when they rounded North Cape. Through the deepening dark Beauport's passengers watched the outline of East Island slipping by as the *Blavet* with the tip of the Main String on her beam bore off a point or two to pick up the light on the Bird Rocks and lay her course for St. John's.

"Yonder's East Cape," announced Taylor, suddenly, pointing out the dim loom of the promontory to Madeline where he stood alone with her on the forward deck. "Now I want you to tell me something. Is there anybody on Byron Island? I know Kellan on the mainland had leases on a summer fishing station there, but does he leave any one in charge all winter?"

"No, he doesn't leave any one," Madeline informed him. "Byron is totally deserted in winter. Why do you ask?"

"Can you keep a secret?" he responded whimsically, though the underlying gravity of his voice warned her that he was speaking in all seriousness.

"Yes, any true woman can," she laughed, "notwithstanding all old adages to the contrary. What is it?"

"I'm going to leave you hereabouts. You didn't think I was going to let myself be paraded into St. John's so quietly, did you? They've no right to take me there, and I'm not going. That's why I wanted to know about Byron. We're just about the nearest to it now we will be, and I'll drop overside when no one is near. If they put about and search the main islands, they won't find me. But I'm not going to say good-bye to you, just *à bientôt!*"

"Sweet Heaven," cried Madeline, all startled, "you risk your life! Think of the hazard."

"It's not so hazardous," he belittled, coolly. "The floes are tightly packed. I'll make it before there's any wind to open them."

"But you'll starve to death on Byron," she protested, "for you'll find nothing whatever to eat."

"There are fish and seals. The seal herds will likely come south very early with this amount of ice about. Don't worry—I won't starve. Besides, I won't be there that long. When I'm sure the *Blavet* is gone, I'll cross over to Grosse. *À bientôt* again, Miss Madeline—or Madeline, if I may! We're past my calculated point now, and every

minute is taking me farther away from my objective. It's high time for me to be overside."

"Overside!" echoed a voice behind them. "Overside is it, you are planning? *Comment?* Lieutenant Grande, come here!"

Taylor whirled on his heel to see Beauport darting upon him from the foot of the forward bridge ladder. The distance he was away told Taylor that he could not have overheard the first part of the conversation with reference to Byron Island. Still, the last part, even the last word which Beauport had echoed, was enough to betray Taylor's intention.

Almost without volition he leaped to meet Beauport, and the latter was caught unawares by the unlooked-for movement. Jacques had expected a chase about the deck, but he experienced a head-on collision before he had time to draw his breath. Taylor's big frame crashed into his. He went reeling aside, and before he was able to take a grip with his hands the Gloucester man seized him bodily, hurled him against the bridge ladder and then jumped over the *Blavet's* low rail on to a pan of ice that rubbed her hull amidships.

Running across the big pan, which he guessed to be nearly half a mile in diameter, Taylor could hear pandemonium breaking out upon the *Blavet*. Her momentum had carried her past him and shooting a glance over his shoulder he made out the dim shape of Codroy John upon the bridge yelling something down the speaking tube, while upon

the bridge platform, wildly gesturing with his arms in the light from the wheelhouse windows, Beauport rated the wheelsman for not getting the vessel over faster.

Beauport did not want to lose contact with the pan of ice on which Taylor had leaped and which would give him a clue for the chase, but Taylor was practically certain that the *Blavet* had lost contact. Moreover, it was with grim satisfaction that he came to the edge of the pan and glimpsed a six-foot lead of open water as black as ink in the night and mirroring a spatter of golden stars.

As he leaped it to the next pan, he paused a second to watch it. It was slowly widening, and though he could see the *Blavet* stopped with all her lights blazing and hear the clamour of her crew pouring overside to ferret the floes for him, he chuckled quietly to himself.

They would not cross that lead by the time they got to it, even if they sensed the direction of his flight, and the ice was too thick to make any speed with boats even if they took the risk of launching them where they might be stove. So, confident that he had put a barrier between him and pursuit, he set about crossing other leads, making his way toward Byron Island.

Ghostly, sullen, dangerous, bleak, lone, barren as was that island, lying with a screen of wild sea between itself and its nearest neighbour, it would be like a haven to him out of the vastness of ocean and night.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE GODDESS OF THE GULF

IT WAS much darker than Taylor had imagined, now that he was away from the glare of the *Blavet*, but though the darkness added to the danger of his slipping into leads between the ice pans, it also had the anomalous power of saving him from discovery by any night-glass on the sealer. He was already nearly a mile from the ship amid much rougher ice, jumbled and jammed by the vagaries of the currents, and he could no longer see her lights. Only, he glimpsed two lanterns run up to her crow's-nests as guiding stars for the return of her scattered crew.

Byron Island lay several miles off the Main String, and at the point where he left the ship Taylor calculated his distance from it at between two and one half and three miles. Owing to the hummocky ice he could not see the island's shore, but northeast-by-east he fixed his eyes upon the glimmer of the Bird Rocks Light, a dozen miles away, and steered a course thereby. Like a heavenly beacon it shone, one hundred and twenty-five feet or more above the sea, pointing the frozen path for his feet.

Yesterday he had listened to the winter voice

of the Gulf. To-day he looked upon its winter face, vast, ruthless, cruel, hungry, the face of fatalism, of mysticism, of eternal void. And deep down under his shuffling feet he could feel the ceaseless throe and heave of the mighty, measured ocean pulse, beating as it had beaten from the beginning of time. To the throb and surge of that pulse, to the lipping of the black water round his boots, to the grind and crack of floes bellying up like sabre-toothed sharks on the tide he forged steadily on till he raised the sheer steeps of Byron's black cliffs.

Inshore the ice was packed more tightly, jammed among the broken stages stilted out into the water. It was rougher travelling, but finally after several slips and falls he managed to reach the outermost stage and crawl along its rickety timbers to a huddle of unpainted wooden buildings used as fish sheds. For all his exertion, he was thoroughly chilled by the low temperature of the floes, and he stumbled into the first building at hand, striking a match as he went, hunting for a stove.

There was none in the first building nor in the second, nor the third, but at his fourth attempt he was rewarded by the sight of a rusted sheet-iron stove and a half-burned candle standing upon a shelf littered with net fragments and other fishing gear.

Taylor lost no time. By the light of the candle he scraped together material for kindling a fire,

crammed the stove full of broken planks, and set it roaring. There was no bedding to be found, but he made the heat of the stove suffice, removing only his boots and oilskins and lying down on the floor within the circle of radiation.

He slept till after midnight, and when he awoke his somnolent eyes held the vision of Madeline Boucher. Half in a dream, half in reality he beheld her standing by the stove with the lighted candle he had used in her hand. Like a whisper in his drowsy ears her voice was calling him, and he accepted it as a sweet phantasy of sleep, this ethereal, intangible apparition fair as the angel that walked the Gulf with warnings for deserving sea captains. Was this a warning for him? Too lethargic to ponder the hazy idea, he was lapsing into oblivion again when a burning hot drop of melted wax stung his cheek.

Abruptly he awakened fully, springing erect with a jump.

"Good Heavens, Madeline, you—the real you!" he exclaimed in utter astonishment. "But it can't be. You? Yes, it is! And the *Blavet*? Where's the steamer? Offshore?"

"The *Blavet* is gone, Walter!"

"To St. John's? You ventured on the floes and they missed you?"

"No, no—gone down!" she told him.

"Sunk? Great Jupiter! How?"

"The floes," Madeline explained, rapidly. "Jacques shouldn't have lain to. It was dangerous, but

you know how reckless he is. He wouldn't give up the search although the ice was freezing the sealer. The heavy floes strained and opened her plates."

"Didn't he lighten her?" asked Taylor, astounded.

"Yes, the crew threw everything overboard, but it was no use. The pressure was too great, and she went down, half foundered, half crushed by the masses of ice. The wind was rising, you see, and the ice was beginning to raft. Listen to it blowing now!"

"Another storm making," nodded Taylor, catching the howl of the blast over the shanties. "Thank God, Madeline, that the *Blavet* didn't go down farther off Byron! Where are the others? On the shore?"

"On the floes just off the shore a little distance. They saved the boats in case the ice-pack should open before we reach the main islands. They're making them ready to drag across while I ran up to warn you. I'm sorry I couldn't keep a secret after all, but I had to tell them."

She laughed ingenuously, and Taylor echoed her merriment.

"I knew!" he accused, banteringly. "I knew it would have to come out some time."

"I couldn't let you starve here," she laughingly defended. "If this ice-pack goes out, you mightn't get across for weeks. I doubt if a small boat, such as are stored up here, could manage it before

spring. And if it were too stormy to cross, you certainly couldn't get fish or anything else to eat."

"Yes, you're right," Taylor admitted. "I fancied it was the good angel of sea captains when I woke, and I see my fancy is fact. Besides, there's no need for me to hide now."

"No, no need—and hurry, won't you? There, they're calling from the floes. They're ready with the boats."

"All right, I'll have my boots on in a moment, Madeline. Better warm yourself well before we start."

While he drew on his sea boots and donned his oilskins, Madeline did as directed, thoroughly warming her hands and body before she put on her mittens and pulled her wool ulster close. Then Taylor checked off the stove so that there was no danger of the shanty catching fire and ran down the beach with her toward the black figures huddled round the boats upon the floes.

"*Comment, Capitaine?*" sneered Beauport. "So you are not quit of us yet!"

"No, nor are you at St. John's yet!" countered Taylor swiftly.

"Will you never mind your bickering?" boomed Codroy John, audaciously. "Though you both be of higher sea post than me, you show wonderful little sense in starting a quarrel o' men. 'Tis a quarrel o' God's we will have o' a sudden by the way this wind do blow!"

One boat had been stove in the launching amid the floes, leaving seven to carry the whole crew if they had to take to the water. Beauport commanded Number One, Codroy John Number Two, the second mate Number Three, the boatswain Number Four, Lieutenant Grande Number Five, Boucher Number Six, and at Beauport's sullen request and mention of emergency Taylor himself took charge of Number Seven.

When the crafts were lined out, Beauport without further parley led off at the head. A number of the crew had been told off to tow with ropes fastened to the bows of each boat, while others stumbled by the gunwales on either side, easing the boat bottoms down the rough pitches of ice or sliding them up the steep faces of the jammed floes. Madeline walked or ran between boats Number Six and Number Seven, sometimes by her father's side, sometimes by Taylor's, or oftentimes jumping into either boat as it was slid across a wide lead.

Steadily they made progress in spite of the ever-rising wind. Indeed its increasing force in the direction they were going served them well, for it packed the pans more tightly the closer they got to the main islands. They encountered no lead so wide that it could not be crossed by bridging with the boats. It seemed as if they were going to make the shore on schedule, but unexpectedly the wind shifted when they were within two

140 THE FOAMING FORE SHORE

miles of Grosse, and the shift loosed the storm that was lurking in the outer waters.

"It's coming!" Taylor roared to his crew, stumbling along by the boat's gunwales, but his voice was lost in the wind as it left his lips.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE NORTH BEACH

OVER the shrouded sky a hand seemed to spread before their uplifted faces, a giant hand with a thousand-mile taper of smoking storm in its grip.

The dark pall widened and undulated, uncanny to the sight, trailing like the magnified smoke of a brand held low to the earth.

"Madeline, where are you?" Taylor shouted at a venture.

So wicked was the force of the cold draft on his eyes that he could not see if she was with her father and the crew of Number Six only a boat's length ahead.

But before he could tell if an answer came, the blizzard broke.

All in an instant it struck them, almost within sight of land, and Codroy John's quarrel o' God's was on their hands. Of a truth it burst like the wrath of Heaven in a howl that strained the wide throat of the world. Under their feet they felt the ice-pack commence to open, and grim jaws of water gaped here and there, black, yawning, terrifying.

"Boats hol!" yelled the shrill voice of Beauport

142 THE FOAMING FORE SHORE

from the head, carrying down to Taylor in the rear above the smash, boom, and thunder of the grinding pans. "All aboard!"

Madeline at that moment had dropped back beside Taylor in charge of boat Number Seven, and the instant Beauport's cry came, Taylor seized her and swung her into the stern-sheets.

"Hold hard, Madeline!" he yelled. "We're going to launch."

All about the freezing spray was flying, stiffened foam billowing the air like floating feathers, fragments of crushed ice hailing against the boat. Through the dark wrack of the storm clouds of steel-gray radiance were struggling, the first light of the shrouded dawn, and under it the chaos of lashing wave and tossing floe glimmered into perspective like a million prehistoric monsters in deadly battle. Puny, merest atoms in that colossal conflict, the men staggered and pushed, shoving the boats out at the mercy of the roaring water.

The floe from which Taylor was launching Number Seven tilted as they shoved. The bow met the waves sooner than he had calculated, and he and the members of the crew on either gunwale had just time to fling themselves aboard before the vicious tide-rips hurried them shoreward. Taylor seized the steering-oar with a shout to his pullers to get in place.

"Pull!" he exhorted. "And two of you bail!"

He drew Madeline back against him and, freeing

one arm at a time, contrived to shed his oilskin coat.

"Slip it on," he urged. "It will keep the ice from chilling you. "You'll be sheathed in it before three minutes."

"But you!" she protested, shivering.

"Never mind, I'm used to it. Quick! Here's a roller."

With a crash the wave sluiced them, giving the bailers a frantic minute or two. It froze as it passed, armouring oars, boat, and occupants like the frosting of a magic brush, and with every shipped wave-crest the armour thickened till Taylor could actually shatter it from time to time with a slap of his palm on Madeline's oilskin. Ahead of them in the wild dawn they could see the other boats, making inshore to Grosse, pulling and bailing as frantically as Number Seven, flinging skyward on the gray-green, white-fanged wave-tops or dodging past the charging fronts of stupendous floes.

And here was the point of greatest danger, just where the final dash for the land had to be made. They had to ride the incurling rollers and race the straining ice at the same time lest the pans crush them like so much matchwood at the waveline. It could be done only by a terrific spurt at the right moment, and in boat Number One upon which he anxiously fixed his eyes Taylor saw Jacques Beauport standing erect, sway through a wide arc to the tremendous pitching of his craft and watching

the conflict of ice and tide upon the hammered beach.

All at once Beauport raised his own steering oar skyward as a signal to those behind.

"Pull, *mes camarades!*" he bellowed, and like a swift echo, every craft answered him: "Pull—Pull—Pull!" all down the line.

Madly they spurted, striving with the wonderful strength of men that rises above the limitations of heart and muscle in emergency and takes on the power of the supernatural. In Number Seven, Taylor shifted his weight this way and that upon the steering oar, marvelling at the strength within him that threw the ponderous, ice-laden craft clear of the grinding floes and steadied it on the crest of the surf that slanted shoreward like a long green terrace.

Down they shot, the ice pans climbing behind like monsters raging at the escape of their prey, and Taylor steered no longer but switched his oar in the forward pull.

"Now, all together," he urged. "Backs into it. Pull for your blessed lives!"

All around him others were shouting, cracking oar and sinew in convulsive effort, shooting for the beach at dizzying speed. The boats were bunched, Number Five to port of him, Number Three to star-board, when a big pan of many tons' weight upended on the top of the surf-terrace and fell sheer through the air. It blotted out Lieutenant Grande's boat as a hand smashes a fly,

throwing up a bore of water with its impact that whirled all the rest of the boats about like corks. Taylor saw Number Three flip bottom-up as his own craft was flung on the beach along with the others.

The ebb went out, the great pan on its shaggy bosom. Only four out of the seven boats lay half-stove and shattered upon the grim North Beach.

"Sweet Heaven," breathed Madeline, quaveringly. "Whose—whose was the other?"

"Number Five," groaned Taylor, mechanically reaching for a hand-ax in the litter of the broken boat locker. "The boatswain's—but we've got to have a fire."

The steel bit obediently under his hand, splintering the broken bits of board, but his mind was not as yet withdrawn from the raging sea, and he watched in a detached way the attitudes of the others.

Several of the sailors were smashing wood like himself. Boucher was running from the wreck of boat Number Six toward them. Beauport stood in a dazed way, staring out where three of his boat's crews had disappeared in a twinkling.

Codroy John strode uselessly up and down the waveline of Grosse, peering for a body or a bit of wreckage from the missing crafts, his great beard matted with ice, his clothes fringed with icicles that broke with every step and gesture.

146 THE FOAMING FORE SHORE

“The Lard has took them,” Taylor heard him reiterating loudly and solemnly as he strode back to the warming beacons beginning to blaze on North Beach. “The Lard has took them all. Quiet they do lie in the tomb o’ the Lard!”

CHAPTER XXV

THE SOUL OF THE ISLAND WORLD

IN THE living room of Boucher's house Boucher himself and Taylor sat smoking in front of the fireplace, flaming brightly with salted drift-wood, grim flotsam of the seas. The dusk of the winter evening had descended as they waited for Madeline to dress for the festive occasion that called them forth—the opening of Boucher's new farm buildings on the upland farm he maintained in conjunction with his other businesses.

Jean Louis, his man of all work, a famous figure in the Islands, a watcher at strange hours and a stroller in strange places, managed the farm for him and by a rigid process of natural selection standardized its products, in which process he had the aid of Madame Louis and the twins Philip and Bonaparte.

Jean was occupying the new house for the first time, and, according to custom, he had invited all the farmers and villagers, including Madeline, Taylor and his landlord Boucher to celebrate the opening. On the snowy road outside they could hear the crowds of villagers already passing on their way up, clamorous with merry voices and shouts of laughter, breaking into a French chanson

under the windows and chorusing it loudly on the clear night air.

Inside her room Madeline caught up the refrain of the chanson, and her deep contralto vibrated on the ears of Taylor and Boucher sitting outside in the dark.

"She is happy, very happy," murmured Taylor, his eyes turning to Boucher through the flickering flamelight that sent the shadows dancing grotesquely about ceiling and walls.

"Why not?" puffed Boucher. "She is young, and the soul of youth is as light as youthful feet. Wait till you see! Jean Louis's house will hum this night. Ah, here she is!"

Madeline was dressed as Taylor had seen her the first night he was wrecked on the Islands, dressed in that filmy creation of tan with the laced bodice that betrayed the swell of her breasts. Arms and neck were bare, milk-white, beautiful, beautiful as the carmine lips, the creamy rose cheeks, the Mediterranean-blue eyes, or the dun-coloured crown of hair she wore in ripples like the twining of the sea-weed in the tide.

The picture she made, framed in the glow of the fireplace and backed by the high-light reflections of the polished pewter and brass on the mantel, was one that brought Taylor involuntarily to his feet.

"I've kept you waiting," she apologized, all smiling.

"Ah, but it was good to wait here in the fire glow," he told her. And as Boucher's chair

scraped noisily in his getting up, added in an undertone, "Wait—for you!"

She only smiled the more, till those great eyes were like the mellow azure of summer skies and cocked her head with a debonair movement to listen to the pilgrimage going by.

"The others are all on their way!" she exclaimed. "We must hurry or else we shall be late, and one never knows what one misses by being late at the house of Jean Louis."

She slipped into a voluminous, close-muffling coat of genuine sealskin and quickly buttoned on high-cut overshoes of black cloth over her dancing slippers while her father and Taylor got into their greatcoats. Since the night the steamer *Blavet* was crushed in the ice floes and they themselves nearly lost in the *Blavet's* boats upon the North Beach, Taylor had discarded his oilskins as too cold for the advancing winter season and as quite unfitted for a sojourn ashore. He had outfitted anew at the stores in the matter of boots, caps, and clothing, for the merchants in the Islands knew his standing as a leading merchant himself in Gloucester and he could draw on them for credit till he got home and take whatever supplies he willed.

So blue cheviot had replaced the oilskins, and in place of heavy sea boots he wore laced ankle shoes of fine dongola kid, soft as a glove, light of sole, flexible, springy, fit soles to thread the merry mazes with which the Islanders were wont to lighten the gloomy winter.

Jean Louis's place was only a short distance up the road, so they did not trouble with sleds or charettes. Taylor gave Madeline his arm on the slippery track, worn smooth by the feet of many passers-by and polished by the gliding sled runners, and they followed Boucher around the bend of the road and turned up the hill through the lane to the farm. The crest of the hill was a blaze of light from the windows of the newly whitewashed house, a blaze augmented with rows of varicoloured lanterns rimming the crest and descending the slope in a double line some ten feet apart.

Between these lines Jean Louis had iced a steep slide, and upon the emerald surface toboggans and sleds were roaring down. Ere they were aware and just as they reached the top of the steps that climbed the hill, Madeline, Taylor, and Boucher were seized by a sturdy crowd of coasters, flung upon an empty toboggan, and launched down the slide amid a pelting shower of snowballs. It was Jean Louis's introduction to the festivities of the night, for Jean was a character among his fellow characters and his house was the abode of merriment unexpected.

With a longer climb to face and less foothold than the steps had afforded, the three got off the slackening toboggan and, drawing it after them and chortling at their innocence, scrambled up the steep. Continually sleds whizzed past them, filled with overcoated lads and maidens, glowing-cheeked, bright-eyed, with their vivid mittens and

warm-hued scarfs and sashes waving in a web of colour against the glittering ice, all under the mellow staining of the multicoloured lanterns. The spirit of youth, the soul of the Island world, the honest, happy, wholesome soul without jealousy, envy, or covetousness radiated from the flight as it went by.

Taylor felt the magnetism of the happy crowd, and he silently marvelled at the contrast between this life far from huge cities and the ramified suburbs of cities that the octopus railroads have made and that mainland life he had had reason to know. Here was peace of mankind; yonder was the grind and rush of mankind's machinery with the struggle and bellow and universal competition, with all the hate and lust and class war inevitable in a close-packed human horde.

Yet small opportunity had he for philosophizing as they were carried in the ever-increasing crowd toward the door. The Islanders themselves were not given to socialistic philosophizing. Among them was no Ghetto, no slum, no ladder of class. Good fellowship, camaraderie emanated from them, and from man to man passed the bond of greeting and jest. The door they swarmed about opened directly into the big kitchen, and inside on the cleared floor a jam of both sexes was closely wedged. Taylor craned his head to see a man standing upon a table making a gesturing speech of welcome.

"That's Jean Louis, Walter!" laughed Madeline, standing on tiptoe to see. "Isn't he a sight?"

"By Jove, isn't he?" agreed Taylor.

For Jean Louis, wild of hair and moustache, eagle-featured, swarthy-skinned, so tall that his pompadour touched the ceiling in the dynamics of his acrobatic address, was clothed in baggy homespun, booted in homemade galoshes of seal-skin with his flapping pantaloons banded about below the knees with twine.

"And there are the twins and Madame Louis!" Madeline added.

Philip and Bonaparte perched like birds upon the corners of the table that held their erratic father, a gaunt pair, awkward with the unfilled angularity of boyhood, their black pates slicked with seal oil, alike as two owls, and regarding the uproarious gathering with the solemnity of two young owls. Madame Louis, as fat as her husband was thin, buxom and embarrassed, in a waist of wrinkled taffeta and a kirtle that her mother had worn in her belledom, pulled Jean's pantalooned leg so that he nearly slipped off the table in his dancing dramatics.

"Monsieur le Boucher!" she whispered, loudly. "Look, you goat, Jean Louis—your own landlord in the doorway!"

Jean came to in time to back away from the table edge.

"Ah, *messieurs*," he announced, unruffled, with a wave of his arm toward Boucher, "here is Mon-

sieur le Boucher the proprietor himself, the man whose new roof shelters me and Madame and the twins and whose bounty we proceed to enjoy to-night. *Messieurs*, M. le Boucher will address you himself!"

Jean bowed and leaped down into the throng, and in his place the laughing proprietor was helped on to the table to add his welcome to Jean's and proclaim for all the freedom of the new house and barns and bid them strike up the music and the dance without delay.

Instantly the jammed floor was cleared by a rush. Wraps were flung to hooks on the wall. Jean Louis and two more seated themselves in chairs upon the table with their violins and played their merry hearts out to the trip and shuffle of the thronging feet upon the freshly waxed floor. A gay scene, youth on wings, with Taylor and Madeline in the flight, while the aged members of the community looked on from the chairs and benches ranged round the walls or from the niches of the doorways of other rooms that opened off the kitchen.

From their chairs these old ones looked, and they looked, also, from the end of the long aisles of their buried boyhood and maidenhood, their trembling fingers faltering over the lap work they had brought with them, their eyes glistening at many a fleeting recollection, their toothless lips murmuring soundless in the noise of the dance over many a tender reminiscence. Old mothers and grand-

mothers Taylor saw, clad in calico or homespun, knitting wool socks, weaving cunning baskets, or even hooking rugs of loud patterns while the dance swung on.

Old men, too, he saw, men bent and crippled by the sea, huddled round the stoves with their canes and pipes, living their adventurous lives again in story form. These gave him a welcoming hand when at last Madeline went off to help Madame Louis with the supper and he sat down to rest. Adventurer of the seas was he himself though he had not half their years to his tally, and they recognized in him the breed of his father whom many of them had known.

Hardly a man was there whose round of life had not been a long hazard. With men of many islands and many harbours he shook hands and exchanged tales, tales reeled off in rapid French that ran into many volumes in the mere space of the evening.

Their friendship and fellowship warmed Taylor's heart, for in all that gathering none stood aloof from him but Jacques Beauport. Inscrutable as ever, Jacques went about darkly, dancing little, and that little with Madeline when he could steal her away from Taylor and the jolly, insistent Island youths. Somehow Jacques did not seem to be in tune with the general camaraderie. Several people plainly feared him. Others evidently mistrusted him, although Taylor could see that they did not wish to offend one with whom they traded.

Now suddenly, from the table which the musicians had deserted, the solemn twins, Philip and Bonaparte, blew two blasts on squawky horns, and immediately the men, old and young, straight and crippled, rose from their chairs. It was the signal for supper, and the chairs were needed for a purpose. In came planks from the woodshed, borne by lusty boys with snow upon their shoulders and bare heads, betraying the making of a storm outside.

The planks were laid in lines up and down the big kitchen with their ends supported by the chairs, and thereon the whole assemblage sat down in a body, handkerchiefs upon their knees for serviettes, to fragrant coffee, lobster sandwiches, cake, luscious jellies made from hillside berries, and ice-cream that might have come stiff from the pole.

Amid chatter and laughter and snatches of song the supper was served by the side-splitting Jean Louis, Madame Louis, the busy twins, the gracious Madeline, the enthusiastic Taylor, and many others who volunteered to keep the hungry company supplied. When the recess that followed the supper gave the musicians a rest and allowed opportunity for the clearing of the kitchen again, Jean Louis conducted the whole younger element out through the flurries of snow to inspect the new barns, of which he was justly proud, showing them the stables, cattle, horses and sheep, the mellow granary, the redolent hay-mow and the survey

of the farm which Boucher had caused to be made to settle nuisances arising out of overlapped holdings and a print of which was tacked upon the granary door for all concerned to see.

It was a nuisance prevalent among the farmers gathered about the print and also among those of other districts and one which sometimes resulted in ill-feeling among the more bruskiy inclined. For in the beginning under France there had never been any permanent holding on the Magdalens. Uninhabited as Cartier had first found them, they were mere summer stations for the bold merchants of St. Malo and Dieppe and other ports whom King Louis the Fifteenth sent across the seas. But, ceded to England under treaty in seventeen hundred and sixty-three, they were peopled by a few Acadians and when later given by George the Third of England in seventeen hundred and ninety-eight as a grant to Sir Isaac Coffin, Coffin had instituted leases and rents and the already-established found that the independent holdings of beach and farm land they had taken up were more or less confused as to boundaries.

Jean Louis, however, staked within his survey, would encroach on no man's land, he loudly declared, slapping the blue print explosively. He paid his rent and respected and considered his neighbour and himself in the sight of God, and no man could do more, nor could the Coffins find any better tenant in the length of the Magdalen Isles!

Voilà! But that was the way to have peace of mind in this world.

And he swung his lantern round and round, showing them the cunning points of the framing, the well-slanted rafters overhead, and while they all stared up at the roof, blew out the light, dived out of the barn, and raced for the house, leaving the shrieking, laughing crowd to grope its way through the dark.

"*Tiens,*" he greeted them from the table, violin in hand, as they came clamouring in to the light, "perhaps many a maid was kissed in that dark, eh? Well, well, what are lips rosy for? On with the dance, *mes enfants*, on with the dance!"

Again the house was filled with the merry sound of the fiddles and the joyous trip of agile feet, dancing, dancing into the small hours while the old ones waited—till at last the old ones rebelled and dragged the younger members of their households laughing off the floor.

Madeline, her father and Taylor were for walking home as they had come, but Jean Louis would not hear of it. It was snowing outside, he contended, and masking the icy spots where one could get a bad fall. He would have the sled up in a moment. Flinging his sealskin cap on his head, he darted away with his lantern for the barn where by the light of other lanterns other horses were being harnessed to other sleds and charettes to carry the home-goers from a distance.

The house was ablaze with lamplight, the glow

158 THE FOAMING FORE SHORE

from the windows falling warmly across the flurries and drifts, and upon the slide on the hill the multi-coloured lanterns still burned with a weird Oriental touch amid the snows. Toboggans and sleds were skimming down in a final flight, some speeding down as the quickest way of launching them on their homeward path to the village, others re-climbing for a last blood-tingling spurt before they bade Madame Louisgood-bye and leaped in with their loads.

In the midst of the turmoil of departing, of the laughter, shouting, and the creaking and whining of the conveyances, Jean drove up with his queer boxed sled for the Bouchers and their guest.

"Come quickly!" he yelled. "My beast is wild in this bedlam. Philip, Bonaparte, stay at home. You should have been in your beds by now."

"Oh, let them come!" pleaded Madeline, kissing Madame Louis good-bye and picking up the twins, one under each arm. "They have been little men all evening and it is not far. Now, Jean Louis, we are all aboard. Whip up!"

With the twins solemn and sleepless to the last, snuggling against her as they tooted their squawky horns in the moist, snow-filled air, they sped down the hill in the teeth of the brewing storm and flew around the bend of the road. Bells were jingling all about them, charettes and sleds spinning and slewing, their occupants whistling and singing and indulging in snow fights with an exuberance that a whole evening of dancing had not exhausted.

Jean Louis had to run the gauntlet several times before he dropped his passengers in front of their door and, circling round to their good-byes, went tearing back with Philip and Bonaparte still tooting between their yawns.

CHAPTER XXVI

EXILED

THAT storm was the first of the violent winter storms that cut off the Magdalens decisively from all the outside world. Like the jumbled flotsam shoal-stranded in the heart of the Gulf they lay, smothered under the combined fury of wind and wave assaulting simultaneously from every side.

From the ruddy, wave-girt shores of Prince Edward Island the west wind charged upon them across three-score untrammelled miles of water. From Cape Breton Island the south wind headed its forces over a five-score stretch. Newfoundlandward the eastern gales rampaged for nearly as great a distance before they broke with their insane strength. While down a sea lane of many unobstructed leagues the Labrador blizzards hurled the bitter frosts and snows and Arctic ice-packs upon the pitiless North Beach.

Long as he had followed the sea, Taylor had never seen such might of the elements. Even the winter gales of the Banks did not approach these ravaging storms. Like typhoons of the Orient they blew, like monsoons of the South Seas, always for days at a time, often for weeks, tearing

away huge fragments of sand and cliff, making the very Islands themselves tremble on their foaming lava bases as if they might disintegrate suddenly and disappear into the sea with the human horde upon them.

Under that fury and cruelty the Islanders crouched, passive, patient, waiting for the spring. Born of exiles in the beginning, reared from less than a dozen homeless families wandering out of Evangeline's Land, they were not a race to complain of this their annual exile from the rest of the world, and for Taylor the peaceful gliding of their lives struck amazing contrast to the primitive savagery of their environment.

He knew the Magdalens fairly well, as all Atlantic-faring seamen knew them, lying as they did on the direct ocean route from Quebec to European ports. For theirs was a history that went back into the dim past to the earliest peopling of the continent. Owned by England or France at several different periods, once part of the proud free Colony of Newfoundland but now part of the Province of Quebec and included in the storied Gulf county of Gaspé, theirs was a checkered record. Landmarks to the eyes of Cartier and Champlain they had loomed in the long ago and served as bases for warring armadas in the days of round shot and sail.

All this, and more, Taylor knew, but he had known it with the outsider's knowledge, with the alien's point of view. For the law forbade Amer-

ican fishermen from landing to dry and cure their fish except in unoccupied bays and harbours, and so never before had he mingled with the inhabitants to such an extent as he did now. Living as a guest in Boucher's house, he saw the lives of the Magdaleners moving in their daily routine although that routine was of necessity cramped and confined in this iron-bound season of the year.

There was no work at all for them to do in the winter. They would begin with the seals in the spring before the offshore fishing took them in pursuit of lobster, herring, mackerel, and cod. Just at present they kept to the houses under the biting cold and blizzard-like storms or in the lulls wandered along the icy shores looking wearily out across the fields of the floes for the seals that indubitably would be drifting down early. On the snow-cloaked hills the youth of the Islands flung forth daily for the coasting whenever the weather permitted, and instead of the shrill shrieking of the tempest, the ring of their sleds and their happy shouts were like sweet music in Taylor's ears.

Right heartily he and Madeline joined in the recreation, for the exercise was demanded because of the indoor life, and the swift plunge down the glassy slopes against the frosty air set the blood tingling through their most sluggish veins.

Beautiful she was in her house costumes but many times more beautiful she seemed to Taylor

darting down by his side upon the whizzing sled, her face glowing under the wintry wind, the warm, potent magnetism of her self exhaling through her furred cloak, her cheeks painted rose and carmine, her eyes gleaming brighter than the frost crystals starring the crust.

Beautiful she was, and under the evening lamp-light beyond a doubt more beautiful still when the gay parties filled the spacious whitewashed houses scattered round the more sheltered beaches and snuggling in the hollows of the hills. While the old folks sat around with their knitting or hooking of patterned rugs, the younger set played games and danced half the night through. The weary weather had to be whiled away, and they sped it as best they could with the dance, the game, the sledding party, the phonograph, the pipe, and the tale.

Weird tales Taylor heard from the lips of the old men huddled close to the red-hot stoves that throbbed and roared with the wood of wrecked vessels with which the Islands' shores were strewn. Of these same wrecks they told him, of the very vessels whose ribs shot up in flames before his eyes, of the greatest gales that ever smoked the sea, of sea hunters cast away upon the floes, of strange ships doomed on the dread North Beach where he himself had been cast with the *Blavet's* boats, of ghosts of the drowned that walked on Deadman's Island.

But it was the evening dances Taylor liked best,

164 THE FOAMING FORE SHORE

gliding over the clean waxed floors with Madeline as his partner, shuffling to a virile two-step on the phonograph or swinging to a languorous waltz upon the violins. Day and night they seemed to find complete satisfaction in each other's company, and if Boucher noticed the deep intimacy that had sprung up between his daughter and his guest, he gave no sign. He had spoken once. He was not the man to speak twice.

Otherwise, and in any weather, Boucher was always the refined Acadian, the generous host of that first night of Taylor's landing on Amherst, solicitous of the comfort of any one under his roof, courteous to a fault.

Jacques Beauport was not living with the Bouchers but had opened his own Island house, now that he was stranded here with the remainder of the *Blavet's* crew, and was looking over his fishing station, getting things in readiness though the season was as yet a little early and the ice was piled about his fish sheds on the beach. Almost daily Beauport came to the Boucher house, but somehow it appeared that Taylor had taken the place that used to be his. It was Taylor who went sledding with Madeline on the hills, dancing in the evenings, wandering on the floe-strewn shores to coax the elusive spring.

Nor were the villagers slow to note that Taylor now walked where Beauport formerly walked. They wagged their heads and their tongues rattled, not spitefully or maliciously but merely as one

would pass the news. Maybe Madeline Boucher was not going to marry that lucky, wealthy Jacques Beauport after all! *Tiens*, here was another on whom her eyes beamed more softly—a handsome stranger! *Oui*, and a bold deep seaman! Was he the man to run away from a winsome maid just because. . . .

And the oldest of them cited the case of his father whose tale had travelled the length of many coasts. One could see that he had the frame and the spirit of his father, and those well-sculptured features—they were the gift of his dead mother to win him a beautiful *femme* like herself.

Yes, yes, they knew much of Walter Taylor. His father had left him a wealthy fish merchant's business in Gloucester. He had gone to many schools, those higher schools where men rowed mad boat races in nothing but their shirts and fought lustily with laughing hearts upon strange football fields, till his father was lost at sea and he had to step in and take over the business and sail his own craft to appease his adventurous soul.

And Madeline, had she not schooling to match, the music and everything that she had received in far Quebec? *Oui*, it was better this way. Youth to youth, and who would deny that Beauport was old enough to be her father? *Certainement*, it was better even under the wrath of Jacques, although one could not tell for certain how it would end. Jacques Beauport's tongue was oddly

still, but there would be trouble yet. One could never fathom that inscrutable Jacques!

Taylor, too, had the same impression as the shrewd villagers, although he felt it in a different way. Bad blood as there had always been between him and Beauport, their enmity had never been as bitter as in its present stage. With every visit of Jacques to the Boucher home, Taylor could sense his increasing antagonism, but the peculiar thing about it was Taylor's conviction that there was no worry over Madeline's attitude coupled with that antagonism. There was resentment, but no anxiety. Beauport was sure of Madeline.

That was it! He was sure, and that was what puzzled. Why was he so sure? There was no engagement. Boucher himself had been blunt about that. Could there be any taint? But one look at Madeline gave the swift lie to that thought. What then? Did the inscrutable Beauport hold some domination over Boucher himself?

The idea set Taylor to thinking, and he realized that though Boucher lived such an important public life on Amherst, he really knew very little about him. Moreover, he could not ask for information. No observant man would have attempted to pry into Boucher's affairs, for he was a person who did not talk overmuch about himself and who strictly minded his own business when that business was anything less than the public welfare.

Yet the idea persisted and instinctively, almost

unconsciously, Taylor associated it with Beauport's apparent surety. Also, it was plain that though Jacques never doubted his ultimate possession of Madeline, he frowned upon her caprices and her deep intimacy with Taylor and registered against Taylor himself the wrath he perhaps would have visited upon her had he been less certain. Still, through all that winter of exile, no reproach, epithet, or challenge did Beauport hurl at Taylor, although his antagonism flamed openly and yet more openly till the latter saw very clearly that another and deciding clash might come any day.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE VANGUARD

THUS they whiled the wintry days away! Roaring January had gone out and erratic February in its wake, bitter with freezing fog, hail, sleet, and snow. It was the beginning of the month of March, and after the heavy gales that heralded its opening by swooping down from the north a calm had fallen with a balmy touch in the air that brought the first suggestion of spring.

Madeline, her father, and Taylor were just finishing breakfast when in rushed Jean Louis, that picturesque, strange manager of Boucher's farm, yelling in great excitement.

"What then, Jean Louis?" demanded Boucher. "Have you bogged my cattle in the quicksands already?"

"*Non*, seals—seals!" he announced, tersely, and dashed away as fast as he had come.

"Those heavy gales have drifted them down here at last!" exclaimed Boucher as they all rose hastily from the table.

"Yes," nodded Taylor, "it's been blowing direct from the Strait of Belle Isle."

"And it means the spring is right at hand,"

prophesied Madeline, her wonderful eyes holding Taylor's with an enigmatic gleam.

"True, and your Island release, as well!" he added with a trace of wistfulness in his smile. "The Magdalens won't be isolated long now. The inter-island boats will soon be running again."

"But certainly," concurred Boucher, getting into his outer coat, "we'll soon have communication now, even if our message has missed making some port. Although I hardly think it could have missed making some port or other."

"Our interference with it couldn't have had any effect on it, could it?" asked Taylor as the three passed out along the slushy road.

"No, I don't see that it could, unless Jacques didn't head the barrel up properly, and that's not likely. My goodness, look at the villagers streaming out on the floes! Everyone's taking a hand in the hunt."

Amherst Island, though elongated, was not very wide at the place they were crossing it, and ahead of them they could see large numbers of hunters making for the beach with all speed. Many were already upon the floes, hauling after them boats fastened upon low sleds made for the purpose, much like the combination used by Arctic explorers, so that they could either drag them upon their runners over the solid ice pans or launch through wide leads or lakes of water between the pans.

Jean Louis had his own boat waiting on the beach, and he was beckoning them impulsively.

"Come on! But come on!" he urged. "I will take you all. The seals are close inshore."

But Madeline shook her head. It was a sight of slaughter, and she did not care to look on it except from a distance, so Jean Louis rushed out alone toward the fringe of the herd which they could easily glimpse, a dark line, thin and straggling, looped about on the spotless floes. Harp seals, Taylor and Boucher made them out to be, harps together with their whitecoat whelps, part of the vast, mysterious herd, the vanguard of that mighty, mobile army that annually migrated from the Arctic and split at the Strait of Belle Isle, one section drifting down Newfoundland's east coast, the other section following the west coast into the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

Taylor's eye glistened as he watched the hunters in their rush. He had gone to the ice for seals himself on the front (east coast ice-fields), but the hunt here with the combination of sled and boat was materially different.

They handled the combination with wonderful skill, the ice pans booming to the swift dash of their runners, the spray flying overhead as they shot their boats into and across intervening lanes. Before the harps took alarm they were among the herds, smiting mother and whelp alike and pursuing the agile animals from floe to floe. On high blazed the sun, shining red through a nebulous spring mist, and its rays striking down blended with the red-sprayed floes and the red-stained clothes of the hunters.

Gaffing the seals and throwing the bodies into the boats, they went, darting and floating hither and thither, Beauport and his men among them. For Jacques was never absent where a dollar might be minted, and he had in mind the sunken *Blavet* down under his very feet somewhere.

But before the last harp was gaffed or had effected escape into open water, a stiff wind had sprang up and the hunters, accepting the warning of the ever-opening floes, came riding their boats ashore lest they might be carried away on the mighty breast of the Gulf. Many a man of their villages they had seen thus cast away to be disfigured with frost bite, deprived of a limb, stricken with pneumonia or consumption, or to disappear in the Northern blizzard and never be heard of again.

How bitter, Taylor thought, was the battle the cruel sea waged against them, how niggard with sustenance they claimed as their right, ever laying the traps of torture and the nets of death for their feet! And what an epic picture they made, these Islanders, a picture grim, sublime in their colossal endeavour, levying toll in season on their none-too-fertile fields for part of their living, and wresting the remainder from the cavern hoards of the miserly deep!

To-day they were lucky to all come ashore before his eyes. To-morrow they might not be so lucky. Yet they gave no thought to the morrow. They rejoiced that even a small section

of the vanguard of the seal herds had fallen as spoil to them, and their laughter rang loud as they landed their boats upon the beach with the doughty Jacques Beauport at their head.

"How now?" asked Boucher. "Jacques, are the old herds coming back to us? There seems to be a greater number to-day than usual."

"In a measure, yes, but nothing like there used to be," lamented Beauport. "I have seen us take them by the thousands whereas now we count in hundreds. No, the herds will never come again on these island shores as they used to come. There are too many sealers on the front and too many here in the Gulf to snap them up before they reach the Magdalens. And after all, the steel steamer is the only thing to hunt them in nowadays, and if it had not been for Taylor the *Blavet* would have been taking a good harvest out in yonder waters at this moment."

"If it hadn't been for your own spite, you mean, Beauport!" amended Taylor. "You've only yourself to blame for bringing your steamer to the Magdalens in the winter season. It was only your reckless hatred of me that made you offer Lieutenant Grande your steamer to follow me."

Beauport glared, the blood mounting in his face, made as if to blurt forth his epithets, then smothered the growl in his throat as his eyes rested on Madeline. Abruptly he turned aside to direct his men in the hauling of the seals away to the tiered seal vats of Grindstone where they would

be skinned, stripped of their fat, and the fat rendered into oil.

Taylor, too, turned away with Madeline, leaving Boucher, always interested in the welfare of his Islanders, making the rounds of the hunters, assuring himself as to the individual success in this their first harvest of the sea.

"That was rude of Jacques," she censured with a *moue* of her lips that mocked and laughed at the same time. "You told him the truth, too, and that will not make him less rude."

"No, Madeline, and I think the time is coming when he will have to be more than rude," confessed Taylor, significantly.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE "MONTCALM"

THE coming of the seal herds marked the breaking of the winter, and the opening of the Grindstone seal vats ushered in the first industry of the Islands' active season. Nor were the other industries long in following, for hard on the heels of the violent March gales blew the dank fogs and pelting April rains, cloaking the shores in impenetrable palls, sweeping clear the icy bays and channels like an immense streaming broom.

Strange wizard hands touched the entire group of the Magdalens. One hand lifted away the blanket of winter. The other hand laid upon them the green mantle of summer. Bright as unboxed jewels they glimmered in all the ecstasy of the sudden transformation, a watery world of glint and sparkle, of light and colour, of giant cliff and imaged shadow, magically hued with the pearly foam on the outer reefs, amber sun on the red capes, and silver quicksands quaking to the pea-green sprawling tides.

Ever quick to spring in snow zones once the snow is gone, the growth shot from the soil. Brave breezes rippled the new sedges of the marshes, sang among the growing meadow grasses, swayed

the leafing berry bushes on the hillsides. Everywhere was the mellow glow of summer, the shimmer of birds' wing, the flash of leaping fish.

Grazing sheep and cattle let loose after their wearisome winter housing dotted the pastures. Children played in the fields of springy turf, smiting their yarn balls to and fro, racing with wolfish dogs or sailing toy boats in miniature inlets with all the bravado of a lusty manhood yet to come.

While upon the low beaches and high beetling cliffs the returning bird flocks swarmed, some in migration to the arctic shores, more to nest on the rocks that formed their breeding ground. Hardly a moment that the air was not alive with the feathered navigators, snowbirds blowing by like late flurries, eider ducks driving north for the Polar seas, curlew homing on the Labrador, tern the lone far farers of wind and storm!

Yet though Taylor gazed on an Island world transformed, teeming with life, bright with colour, there still persisted that hint of sombre remoteness, that dreary isolation, that sense of poisoning in an eternal void. For though the bays and harbours, the channels and the shallow inland lakes of Amherst were clear of ice and the fishermen overhauling boats and nets upon the beach, the loose floes still covered the outer seas. Especially were they scattered to the south and west in the path of mainland vessels crossing.

In vain Madeline and her father looked for an answer to their message. No steamer smoke

blurred the ocean horizon. It was true that the Islanders were not exactly in want, for monopoly was frowned upon by their sturdy, independent natures.

Excepting big fish merchants, who handled most of the Magdalens' catch and who generally hailed from outside ports, one man was, as a rule, as rich as another. Those with cupboards plentifully stored shared with those whose larders were lean. Some fish were already beginning to come in from the shore waters, firm and delicious fish from the cool caverns of the Gulf, and the early vegetables would soon be springing in their exotic growth, but the need of the moment was bacon, flour, and salt—which latter article their trade demanded in large quantities.

So in the second week of May the possibility of getting a small sailing boat through the floes once they loosened a little more began to be discussed. Taylor at once volunteered to sail the vessel if the attempt should be made, since, the Magdalens being under the jurisdiction of Quebec and not of Newfoundland, there was nothing to prevent his leaving the Islands if he could.

"You see, I'm a deep seaman," he explained to Madeline, "and I think I would be surer to make the mainland than any of your shore fishermen here. I don't say I'm a better sailor than many of them, but they haven't had the offshore experience and the sailing in ice that I've happened to strike on the Newfoundland and the Labrador

coasts. So they might not know how to meet conditions just as well. That's the point."

"But you mustn't try it yet," objected Madeline, with a shiver of apprehension. "The floes are too dangerous yet, even if an attempt is necessary in the end."

"Yes," corroborated Boucher, taking his pipe from his mouth where he sat, "it is only risking destruction yet. In a week or ten days perhaps——"

Boucher paused, for the face of Jean Louis, that watcher at strange hours, that stroller in strange places, appeared at the window. His face was red with running, his lips spluttering in his haste for words.

"A—a—steamer!" he stammered. "I was climbing on the top of Entry, and I saw it. Hurry! You can catch its smoke in a moment."

"At last! At last!" exclaimed Boucher, suddenly shaken with nervousness.

He leaped up, pocketing his pipe with a trembling hand, seized his hat, and hurried out.

Madeline's eyes drew Taylor's as they rose to follow, and in them there was reflected a chaos of feeling that he could not definitely analyze. He saw, or imagined he saw, at one and the same time, joy and disappointment, relief and chagrin, elation and depression. Yet only for an instant did Madeline let him fathom them. Then she was speeding breathlessly down to the beach with him running at her heels.

Before them the shelving sands of Amherst sloped down to the harbour and swept out in a long bar, dotted with fishermen's shanties, to end in a hammerhead of rock that lay like a break-water fending off the seas from the precariously perched houses. Bar and upper beach were covered with villagers thronging at the word Jean Louis had spread as he ran through with his news. They were pointing out to one another a dark smudge in the sky beyond the six-hundred-foot cliffs of Entry Island sheering loftily into the clouds.

The clouds themselves, copper coloured when the sun struck them, were veiled every alternate moment with delicate drifting mist, but the smoke smudge was plain in the gossamer veil like a sombre hand raised before some supernatural appearance. Still, such was the deceptive state of the atmosphere that they could not tell how near or how far off was the vessel whose funnel made the smudge till without warning she suddenly drifted clear through a rent in the veil.

"Is it the Pictou boat?" cried Madeline excitedly.

"No, an ice-breaker, I think, Madeline," decided Taylor, straining his eyes.

Before they could confirm his decision the vessel disappeared in the mist as abruptly as it had emerged, and as if to tantalize the Islanders at the climax of their waiting, it played the trick with infinite repetition.

Now they glimpsed it close inshore, now miles away in the seeming hazy distance. At one moment it appeared to float in the clouds instead of the sea, at another drifted low like a derelict, shadowy-hulled, showing nothing above her careening rail. And sometimes they gazed on her forward deck alone, sometimes on her after deck, as if she had broken in two on the Pearl Reef and was slowly sinking to the bottom. But at last the sun struck her fairly, and they saw the stark lift and loom of her smashing a path through the loose ice pans.

"Yes, an ice-breaker, Madeline!" exclaimed Taylor.

"Yes, yes, Walter, you were right," she breathed in exaltation.

"*Oui*, the *Montcalm*," identified Boucher, huskily. "The ice-breaker *Montcalm* as sure as we stand on this beach!"

The beach went wild at the sight of her steaming in through the entrance. Like madmen the villagers cheered and threw their caps into the air as they dashed for their skiffs to meet her. Jacques Beauport's skiff was there and Jean Louis's and many more, and it was to Jean Louis's that Boucher hurried, eager to hear the first word of the *Montcalm's* captain.

"Come, Madeline; come, Captain Taylor!" he urged, fussily. "Jean Louis, are you ready with your skiff? I must be at her side to greet her captain!"

CHAPTER XXIX

NO PASSENGER

JEAN LOUIS paused not for a few feet of water. He ran out on the uncovered sands and splashed off the sands through the shallows, sending the spray flying in all directions. His sealskin galoshes were soaked, his pantaloons dripping, but the weather was warming, and little did the elongated stroller care. Half the time he was falling off the rocks into neck-deep water or being overturned in his boat when he ran on some submerged bar.

He threw his baskets and traps and nets to the sands out of the way of his passengers, the while a score of others did the same thing all about him, laughing and shrieking in contagion.

"Come on, Mademoiselle Madeline," he yelled. "Here is a dry seat for you!"

"Yes, come on, Madeline!" laughed Taylor, blithely.

Caught in the excitement of the arrival, he seized her bodily, and, holding her clear of the shallows, waded after Boucher into Jean's skiff.

With a blare of sound from her siren the *Mont-calm* spurned the last ice pan aside and plowed the

clear harbour into foam. Her anchor was scarcely down when she was beset by a whole fleet of skiffs manned by all manner of men of whom Boucher and Jacques Beauport were chief.

"Welcome, Captain, welcome!" greeted Boucher, with emotion. "Never was a vessel more welcome. You can guess that for yourself. But we have waited a long time."

"Thank the storms for that, Boucher," laughed the *Montcalm's* captain. "It's been about the worst winter I've ever seen. They got your message on the mainland in the early part but——"

"Eh, they got it, after all?" interrupted Boucher. "I was beginning to doubt its making the mainland. They got it early, you say?"

"Yes, not long after it was sent," informed the captain. "The second week in December if I remember rightly! It was picked up at Port Hastings on Cape Breton."

"Then it must have drifted straight ashore from my hands!" cried Taylor.

"*Non*, from mine!" growled the voice of Beauport from the skiff next their own.

The eyes of the two men battled, till Boucher broke in on them.

"What matter whose hand?" he reproved, clothed with authority in this official moment.

He turned again quickly to the *Montcalm's* captain, as if he wished to prevent any possible outbreak between the two.

"How now, Captain? Are you ready to unload?"

"All ready if you are, Boucher," was the reply, "and let them be quick about it. I have other calls to make, and the weather doesn't look any too good."

Into the fleet of skiffs that part of the *Montcalm's* cargo consigned to Amherst was speedily lowered—pork, flour, salt, and sundry other kinds of supplies—and the skiffs conveyed it ashore where it was piled into all manner of conveyances to be freighted up the beach, into boxes hauled like stoneboats, wheelbarrows, dog-carts, charettes drawn by steers or the hairy Island horses.

In company with the other skiffs Jean Louis's boat darted back and forth from the *Montcalm* to the Amherst beach, assisting in the frantic ferrying. Along with Jean toiled Taylor and Boucher, and even Madeline herself lent a hand with lighter articles. A splendid picture, virile, rare, they made on the crescent waters, hiving round the ice-breaker, skimming ashore, bending under boxes, barrels, and bundles or heaving them into the carts—a colourful picture filled with the brawn of men, the bright eyes of children, the rosy cheeks of maidens, the glow of women's kirtles, red, blue, purple, and green against the golden sands.

Abruptly the *Montcalm's* siren blew as a signal that all the consignment was unloaded, and the skiffs backed hastily from her side.

It was then that the fussing Boucher relaxed long enough to remember that another had waited almost as long as he himself for the coming of a mainland vessel.

"Ha! I forgot, Captain Taylor!" he burst out. "I do not wish to urge a guest to depart, but if you thought of—that is, there is need for hurry if——"

Boucher hesitated, a little embarrassed, for to his courteous nature it seemed that he was urging his guest to depart.

Jacques Beauport, however, standing in the skiff beside, hardly able to restrain himself from uttering the substance of the words Boucher had uttered, had no such gentlemanly diffidence.

"Wait, Captain, wait!" he bellowed, shaking an oar at the bridge of the *Montcalm*. "A passenger for you!"

Angry, mortified, Taylor involuntarily arose, one foot on the gunwale of the skiff, his hands clenching under the desire to choke Beauport where he stood with the mocking gleam of triumph in his eye. He did not know how to excuse himself for not going, how to force himself to go in accordance with Boucher's suggestion. The great truth that smote him was that he did not want to go—yet. Though the *Montcalm* waited, he could not take passage. Still imprisoned in the heart of the Gulf was he, though the path to the mainland showed plain, wave bound still by the surge of a mighty desire.

Helplessly his glance stole past Boucher to Madeline, and in his glance she read the silent pleading for her to make the decision for him, and a red spot burned on Madeline's cheek as she looked Jacques Beauport deliberately in the eye and without hesitation waved a hand to the captain of the *Montcalm*.

"Captain Taylor is waiting for the mail steamer!" she called in a bell-like, steady voice. "For the Pictou boat. Good-bye, and a safe voyage back!"

Taylor's blood bounded at her words, and he exulted grimly at the sound of a smothered oath in Beauport's throat. Beauport darted one vicious look at them both and rapidly sculled his skiff to the *Montcalm's* side and clambered up as her anchor was weighed and she began to move. Once on her deck he cried to Codroy John to beach his skiff, and then disappeared into the captain's cabin.

"Well, where in the world is that Jacques going to go now?" demanded Boucher, astonished, as they sat in the skiff on the harbour water and watched the *Montcalm* smoking out of the channel.

Madeline shrugged her pretty shoulders and made a motion for Jean Louis to take up the oars and row them ashore.

"Who knows?" she propounded, her eyes brimming with a mischievous light as they rested on Taylor. "Who knows where that man is going

but that man himself? If I should guess, I might say he was going over to Grindstone Island to haul his early lobster traps. Captain Taylor, we will go over there some day soon with Jean Louis to Jean's own traps, and then we will know for sure!"

And in the sheer lightness of her heart she tossed her head at him as the skiff skimmed shoreward and raised the deep, powerful contralto voice he loved in the "Song of Amherst Beach" whose crescent wave line they were approaching:

The Amherst Beach with the low sun lines;
There's a path of blood where his splendour shines!
And the ochre glow
Of the deep below
Leaps up like a light in the anchor chain,
Like sea poppies red on the white spume flakes
Or maiden's cheeks as her vigil breaks
When the looked-for sail is plain.
For upland calls to the upland breed
With its balsam bed and its glowing gleed,
With a pagan shout
And a comrade stout
And thews that are born of the mountains broad;
And each to the home that has suckled him,
Afar or near, be it gay or grim,
Be it pineland sea or sod!
And each to the home that suckled him,
Afar or near, be it gay or grim,
Be it pineland, sea or sod!

186 THE FOAMING FORE SHORE

And Amherst calls from Demoiselle Hills
 To the pilgrim faint with his toil and ills;
 And she calls as well
 O'er the gliding swell
To voids at the hearts of the sailormen:
 A whisper of home on the opal wave,
A mem'ry stirred from the dead year's grave
 And quickened to life again!
Oh dream that dawned in the Yesterday!
 Oh, ye spindrift cast in the wild waves' play!
 A talisman true
 Will I treasure you
To show me the way to a cherished shrine;
 For long as the fathomless sea endures
Its bonds constrain you to paths of yours
 And my restless feet to mine!
For long as the fathomless sea endures
 Its bonds constrain you to paths of yours
And my restless feet to mine!

As into the depths of the sea, Taylor gazed into
her wonderful eyes, his fibres thrilling at the way
she had chosen for him, and like a symbol of a day
that might come he cherished her song in his heart.

CHAPTER XXX

THE FISHER'S GOLD

MADELINE was as good as her word, for upon the first visit of Jean Louis to his lobster traps off Grindstone, she and Taylor accompanied him. Jean had planted his underwater trapline the day before, and he was one of the early fishers abroad, for upon the Grindstone shore many traps were still piled up like cordwood, awaiting repairs or the coming of the lobster men to set them. Slatted boxes, shaped like half-cylinders, baited inside, weighted so that they would rest upon the bottom and lined to a floating buoy, were the traps, and the industry of catching and canning was the great mainstay of those who lived on Grindstone.

Early as it was, the fishery was yielding good returns to the hardy ones engaged in it. Every day their numbers were being augmented as the ice cleared off the lobster grounds, and the canneries were now going at full blast. They had to take full advantage of these early summer months, for in July and August the protecting hand of the law spread over the grounds, closing the season till September.

Out from the cluttered beach past the worn

Grindstone cliffs tunnelled and arched into fantastic shapes, they pulled to where Jean Louis had set his first trap with chopped herring rolled up in a net bag as bait, and from that first red block buoy he followed a line of the same bobbing red buoys all over the lobster grounds. Sometimes he secured a big-clawed monster, sometimes let a short one go, and at other times spilled out intruding crabs and set a new bag of bait to replace the pilfered one.

Taylor worked the boat. Madeline handed Jean Louis the little bags of bait, while Jean himself, wet and slippery from the incessant hauling of the traps, lined them in hand over hand to his gunwale and let them splash back again to their beds. Steadily they worked under a blazing hot sun that blistered the oily sea and set a million blends of colour crawling and twining on the silky wave-crests. The halts were frequent, but with Taylor at the oars it was possible to cover several miles of Jean's trapline before noon and eat lunch on a gently rocking surge at the limits of the grounds.

Here and there they glimpsed other lines of buoys, painted in other colours, writhing over the smooth green hills of water, for every man had his individual mark to tell him where his trapline strung. Red, white, checkered, blue-green, yellow-black and combinations, varied even more widely by a difference in shape, the buoys speckled the wave, and where the buoys ran out, the lines were

floated with a bit of board, an empty bottle, or a tin sirup can.

Yet in all those patterns, search as they might, they failed to find the mark of Jacques Beauport on any traps.

"His buoy is a brown ball, and it is easy to see," Jean Louis explained. "It is not here. He is not fishing for lobsters, neither he nor his men."

"Then why did he fling off to Grindstone that day?" demanded Madeline. "The cod grounds are a long way from here."

"Maybe it was to see about his oil," hazarded Taylor. "He must have had quite a number of seals in the Grindstone vats."

"No, it was something else," she declared, shaking her head thoughtfully. "It was something that concerns you—and maybe me. I saw that in his manner. Besides, he has not been to our house since."

It was true that he had not appeared at the Boucher home where he had always been a daily visitor. More than that, they had not seen him at all anywhere for some time. He had not left the islands on the *Montcalm*, for others had spoken to him on the cod grounds, over at Grand Entry on Coffin Island, and also at Byron Island where Kellan of the mainland had come by schooner and opened his summer fishing station once more. But he shunned the Amherst beaches, and his attitude puzzled them, for up till this moment he

190 THE FOAMING FORE SHORE

had shown no desire to avoid Taylor but rather to provoke a conflict.

Still, there was no fathoming the man and his moods at all, and they knew nothing for certain. So they put him out of their minds as they sculled through the lazy afternoon, hauling the rest of the lobster traps.

A little breeze sprang up toward evening, and Jean hoisted sail on his skiff as they ran for shore at Etang du Nord where they had left their charette. In the cool of the drowned sunset, when the moon showed like a crescent of platinum in the hazy sky, they ran in to that busy bay where skiffs and schooners were flocking in from their day's labours and lying with drooping sails while the fishermen and fisherwomen carried home the spoils.

Jean Louis was attending to the sails. Taylor had the tiller with Madeline sitting beside him as they fluttered in among the homing fleets, and at the picture they made under the silver moonlight she gripped Taylor's arm with tense fingers.

"Sweet Heaven!" she breathed. "That is a sight for island eyes, aye, and a balm for island hearts—the white sails, the brown beach, the houses beyond, homes against the burnished sky, Walter, the homes that make their world—yes, the world for all."

"Yes, Madeline," he whispered behind Jean Louis's back, "such a home as you will have of your own some time, perhaps, as I may have if the gods are kind, as—as we two may have if——"

"Listen," she interrupted, as he thought, with nervous haste and her hand trembling on his great arm through which his virile pulse was leaping, "there is a song of theirs," "The Fishers' Gold" which the mermaids sing on the shoals. I wonder if they remember?"

Softly she sang, out of the magic of the moonlight, out of the floating skiff that was scarcely visible in the bay:

The fisher sails, the fisher sails above the sapphire seas
Come homeward with the ebbing tide and with the landward breeze;

The straining net has drawn to-day a harvest from afar,
But oh! a richer harvest waits within the harbour bar.
The ebb tide flows, the ebb tide flows full from the pulsing deep;
Flotsam and jetsam of the world the age-old law will keep;
So in his heart the sailor joys; like white sea-birds a-wheel,
Home with the homeward wind he swings, home on his slanting keel.

Madeline paused. A silence had fallen on the Etang du Nord beach. Faces of fishermen and the fisherwomen were turned seaward as if they had caught the voice of the mermaid of the shoals. Tenderly she went on:

The fisher songs, the fisher songs ring over cliff and sands,
Mingling with reapers' melodies on distant meadow lands;
But softer notes waft out to him beyond the gray sea wall—
The vesper chime, the housewife's chant, the merry children's call.

The fireside, the fireside and ships of flame a-sail,
The golden curls about his knees, the ears that drink his tale,
A hand that clasps his own brown hand, a love in silence told,
A heart that's safe within a heart—this is the fisher's gold!

Again the silence! No sound but the music of the moonlight on the pebbly wavetops and the whisper of those waves on the painted beach!

Taylor slipped his big hand down till it found Madeline's.

"A hand that clasps his own brown hand," he quoted, "a love in silence told—

A heart that's safe within a heart—this is the fisher's gold."

He thought her hand responded to the pressure of his own as out of invisibility Jean Louis drove the skiff into the moon-etched foreground of the bay.

"Aye, your gold and mine, Madeline!" he whispered, tenderly.

"*Tres bein!*" blurted Jean Louis, unexpectedly. "We could not find the brown ball, but we have found the user of the brown ball. Yonder is the man. Look—Jacques Beauport, as large as the devil lets him be!"

They stared in the direction Jean pointed with his tanned, water-wrinkled hand, and amid the fisher crowd grouped in a perfect pose of unconscious picturesqueness they glimpsed the Breton who had sulked for days from their sight.

In his loose casque and sabots he stood, gazing out under the shade of his hand against the dazzling moon glare, bending forward eagerly as if the siren song had drawn him to the water's edge.

"Madeline!" he called at sight of their skiff floating vague as a shadow beyond the clustered fleets. "Madeline, is that you?"

Taylor gave a growl of disgust. Jacques Beauport was the last person in the world he wanted to see at that moment, and it seemed that in another minute they must perforce touch the curved rim of the sands and step out on the beach into his undesired company.

But Madeline leaned over before they had threaded the maze of vessels and gave a swift direction to Jean Louis in a whisper.

"Quick, Jean, run past!" she pleaded. "As I love you and Madame Louis and the twins, run past for me. They cannot be certain just what we are among so many sails, and if Jacques likes to sulk, why he may sulk a little longer!"

Jean Louis chuckled silently and murmured something under his breath. With a noiseless flutter of his sail he luffed up and Taylor sheered off obediently behind the screen of the canvas of the fishing boats so that they skirted the end of the Etang du Nord beach, flitting like a giant moth along the shore and out of sight.

When the beach had faded from their view in the silver vapour that exhaled from its surface they heard voices raised ashore in dispute as to the materialism of their crafts.

"It was a real sail. No ghost craft about it!"

"But there you are wrong. *Non, non*, nothing at all but a phantom!"

"You fools"—it was the surly voice of Jacques Beauport rating them—"I tell you it was nothing of the sort. It was an Amherst craft, and there

194 THE FOAMING FORE SHORE

were Amherst people in it, people I happen to know well."

"Bah, Jacques," with loud, derisive laughter, "bah! It was nothing but imagination told you that, imagination, *mon ami*, imagination and your eyes under the magic moon!"

And boisterously the whole beach took up the joke, laughing at Jacques till their sides ached and they had to set their loads of lobsters down to laugh some more.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE NIGHT CATCH

BY THE frowning lava bases of the island Jean Louis took the tiller and steered the skiff in the shadows.

"Ha, ha!" he chortled, gleefully. "That will make Jacques Beauport boil, being laughed at like that. For, *mes enfants*, no man of his disposition likes to be laughed at. It is like laughter at a bull that makes the bull put down his head and charge the laughing one. If you hear of a fight there was on such and such a night on the Etang du Nord beach, why you will know Jacques Beauport was in it and we three innocents were the cause. *Voilà*, the next time I see him I will tell him a tall tale of a siren I saw on the shoals off Etang as I pulled my lobster traps in the dusk."

Taylor smiled quietly to himself, a grim elation thrilling his being, a sudden delirious madness akin to the moon madness that seemed to pervade the ocean night. It was patently plain to him that Madeline did not want the company of Jacques Beauport either, this night of witchery and mystery and moon madness. His hand sought and found hers on the gunwale as they glided along the red cliffs of Grindstone shining bronze under

the transforming silver radiance, seeking the inter-island channels that could take them home by water instead of by land.

"I left the charette with Pete Lacrosse," the thoughtful Jean Louis informed them all at once. "So my fiery beast will be all right till morning. Pete is a good man to look after his own animals and he will see that mine lacks nothing. In the morning I think I may haul the traps again."

By devious channels and pools that every rising tide was accustomed to leave behind it when it went out, now in one location, now in another, so that for boat on the water or for charette on the land the route was always changing, they wound about among the flooded bars and rocks between Grindstone and Amherst. Even under the light of the moon they could mark the extreme phosphorescence of the rippling waters partially sheltered and full of shore images so that they gleamed as a web of watery lightning. Abruptly, and straight ahead of them, a shower of living, leaping fire broke weirdly from the web, like a fagot of burning brands cast up from the deep.

"What's that?" demanded Madeline. "A school of capelin?"

"No, it looks like menhaden!" Jean Louis declared, watching the showering brands closely.

"By Jove, no, I think you're mistaken, Jean!" exclaimed Taylor. "I'm pretty sure it's mackerel."

"So?" cried Jean, leaping up in excitement.

"Then your eyes are truer than mine in this dazzle. I must find out, for if you are right, Captain, it is fiery dollars we see skimming yonder, and I would be a poor fool not to gather them in for madame and the twins."

Supple as an acrobat, he shinned up the stout mast of his skiff, his toes gripping like a cat's through the sealskin galoshes and his banded pantaloons ballooning ludicrously as he hung silhouetted against the disk of the gibbous moon, staring over and down in the direction of the phosphorescent streaks.

"I believe you are right, Captain," he confided, sliding down again. "There are also other fish about, many of them, and I think this is a very fair school. Hail the shore, if you will, for another skiff, while I overhaul my seine!"

Jean ran forward to where his mackerel seine was folded in a big basket beside the basket that held his lobsters and began to replace it anew, straightening out any tangles, slipping the lines through his hands and seeing that leads and floats were in their proper positions.

"Ahoy, the beach, there!" Taylor called through his trumpeted hands to the nearest fish-stage. "Ahoy, there! Mackerel school!"

It was a magic word, for the mackerel was one of the most valuable fish the Islanders handled and one they greatly loved to take whether by day with jig and clam for bait or by night with the sweeping seine. In instantaneous response to his

hail another skiff shot out from the stage to join that of Jean Louis.

"Hello, Napoleon Claire!" greeted Jean, joyously. "I would not want a better boat handler. Ha, Napoleon, you may thank us for lining your pockets if we have guessed right! Here is your end of the seine to drag!"

Jean dropped one end overboard for Napoleon to pick up, and the moment Napoleon grasped the headline floating by, Jean himself ran down his sail.

Taylor took the oars to scull and with Napoleon creeping up behind, ready to act as a pivot on which they might swing, he drove the boat in a flattened arc about the spot where the school had broken surface in pursuit of the smaller fry that formed their prey.

Other denizens of the deep were darting all about them, skimming the top like a moving shoal of diamonds or fluking far down like fire-gilded fish in the nether-world River Styx.

A small school of herring shot by, pursued by a great flat skate, ugly as a demon. A voracious dogfish finned in zigzag rushes in the rear. Another school, this time of capelin, glowed the bay with opal light that scattered and pooled like iridescent oil and went suddenly dark as several huge fifty-pound cod launched into them like greased vessels into a harbour slip.

War of the sea there was in the Magdalens as well as war of the land, the same bitter conflict, the incessant preying, the eternal clash and survival!

"There they are, Walter—oh, look!" warned Madeline as the school broke again a few fathoms ahead and to port of them.

"Yes, but hurry!" exhorted Jean Louis, breathlessly. "Ah, hurry, Captain Taylor, or they may sound and be gone!"

With a few swift, powerful strokes Taylor headed the school and swung about to pen them in the shallows. Working frantically, Jean Louis paid out the seine as they circled, and once they were well around their arc, Napoleon Claire rowed rapidly to meet them, decreasing the size of the enclosed water space as he came.

The ends of the seine met, the cork floats on the headline circling the surface, the leaden sinkers on the footline ringing to the bottom, the mackerel school dashing madly about in a cylinder of twine.

"Foot ropes—haul!" shrieked the prancing Jean Louis.

He pulled. Napoleon Claire pulled. Taylor dropped his oars to help, and Madeline herself grasped the foot ropes with her strong, slim, white fingers. The ropes they brought in hand over hand drew up the footlines, pursing the seine so that the trapped fish were bagged in a bag that tightened every moment.

Like a boiling pot it simmered, while Jean Louis looped a length of the net he had used for his lobster bait bags about an iron hoop and dipped the leaping mackerel out with the im-

provided dip net. Quivering, kicking, they came up and into the boat bottoms, their bellies glimmering silver, their striped backs glinting blue as gun-barrels in the moonlight, splendid beauties, five pounds and more in weight, worth a full half-dollar apiece!

Other prizes of other varieties not so valuable Jean found, too, taken unawares in the trap, and at the last he stirred a sulking monster from the bottom of the bag.

"A dogfish!" he shouted. "Look out! Look out, or he will spoil my net!"

Taylor jumped, but before he could brain it with an oar, the shifty member of the shark family darted like a torpedo against the side of the seine, ripping and writhing savagely, and was gone.

A big hole gaped in the seine.

Jean Louis surveyed it ruefully, making a mental estimate of the damage done. Then he tossed his head lightly as his glance switched to his own boat-bottom and to that of Napoleon Claire, each bottom covered with the precious mackerel.

"Ha, but never mind!" he exulted. "The hole will mend, and here is enough money to pay my rent at twenty-five cents an acre—*oui*, or to buy it outright at four dollars!"

"You see, Jean," laughed Madeline, "that is what you got by heeding me and running past Etang du Nord when I told you to do so!"

"Yes, Jean—the Fisher's Gold!" supplemented Taylor. "It is always a woman who brings it!"

CHAPTER XXXII

THE CALL OF THE MAINLAND

THOSE were lazy summer days on the lazy summer deep, days of matchless colour and light for Madeline and Taylor, days that were heralded and ended by sunrises and sunsets beautiful beyond compare, violent sunrises that broke from the Gulf like the blare of emblazoned trumpets and sunsets equally violent going down on the heaving horizon like the clash of brazen cymbals. Many hours they spent with Jean Louis when he could spare the time from Boucher's little farm, hours with the lusty fifty-pound cod, with the pretty striped mackerel lured to the mackerel jigs by fresh clams dug from the shoals when the tide was out.

The harvest of the sea was fairly begun, herring, cod, lobster, mackerel, and fish of lesser value were brought in daily, and while the fleets went out the canneries and packing houses hummed ashore and the women tended and turned the slab-like cod on the flakes.

But there swiftly came a day, and all too swiftly for Taylor, when the magic wire writhing undersea to the distant mainland was alive again, and the sixteen telegraph stations dotted here

and there about the islands of the Magdalen group stood ready to take or send a message once more. In the Amherst office Boucher bent over the clicking key with Taylor leaning anxiously on the table beside him for word of the Pictou boat expected there within twenty-four hours.

"She sailed before dawn this morning," translated Boucher as the key fell silent. "She will be here before night."

Taylor said nothing, staring at the potent instrument that had lain unable to call the world so long but which now in a moment summoned that world back for him, and when he looked up Boucher held out his hand.

"Captain Taylor, I am glad—and at the same time sorry," he spoke frankly. "You know. The Islands grow on one. I must confess that they are an inseparable part of my own life now and that the telegraph is woven into my nervous system. *Oui*, it grows. There is no denying. That is why I am so very sorry for you."

Taylor searched Boucher's face as he gripped the hand extended to him.

"Then the caution you gave me the first night I came here still holds good?" he asked, hesitatingly.

"Yes," nodded Boucher, laying his other hand sympathetically upon Taylor's shoulder. "It still holds good. My boy, I am sorry, but it cannot be otherwise."

The fresh clicking of the key made him turn to it

again in haste, and Taylor, after lingering and vacillating and seeing that Boucher was busy communicating with the other Island stations, passed out and down to where he had left Madeline on the beach.

It was low tide, and upon the uncovered fore shore men, women, girls, and boys, the men and women in rubber boots, the girls and boys for the most part in bare feet with skirts and pantaloons girded high, were wandering along the waveline digging clams for mackerel bait with three-pronged forks. A great wind was blowing from the north-east, dead offshore. It was too rough for any of the skiffs or schooners to put outside to fish, so the fishermen were employing the leisure hours in gathering bait for the morrow which might break calm.

At the sound of Taylor's boots in the sand Madeline turned about from her chattering to the bare-legged, kirtled maidens who looked like rosy goddesses of the sea with dripping tridents in hand.

"Again and again you are the Goddess of the Gulf who is the good angel of deserving sea captains, the queen of all these other goddesses," he bantered with a show of lightness that failed to deceive her.

"You have news," she told him, pointedly, as she read his eyes. "My father must have got a message. Is it about the Pictou steamer?"

"Yes, Madeline," he confessed, "and it'll be here before night."

His glance avoided hers, straying aimlessly out over Pleasant Bay to the open waters beyond. From those waters, as if the sullen floes had seen in the *Montcalm* an ally of summer not to be defeated, the ice, honeycombed by the ever-increasing warmth of the sun, had retreated day by day till the fleets of the fishermen fully reclaimed the offshore cruising grounds that winter and the Caliban storm-god had usurped so long. Taylor glanced aimlessly, but his glance suddenly fixed with a start upon the billow-scalloped skyline.

"What is it?" demanded Madeline, catching his start and wheeling to stare with him. "Not the boat already?"

"No, schooners, a big fleet making for shelter here!" he exclaimed. "Gloucester boats, too—some of them!"

"Your home boats?" she asked, excitedly.

"Yes, and others," supplemented Taylor. "Maybe, Madeline, there'll be men among them whom I know."

Eagerly they watched the oncoming fleet of schooners driving from the fury of the storm-god whose power would overwhelm them outside.

CHAPTER XXXIII

SALVAGE OF THE STORM

IT WAS a motley fleet of vessels they gazed on, vessels new and old, rigged with ancient patched canvas and graced with shining new cloth, old type schooners lumbering clumsily beside the trim, yachtlike modern boats.

Taylor could see many with the old double headsails, pulling like balloons in the gale. He saw fore and mains reefed like a host of folded flags and topsails come down like floating handkerchiefs. White local sails, dark alien sails shifted and changed places. Pole-masted schooners seemed always surging to the fore, riding gracefully, while the older type crashed the seas behind at every jump with the swinging outboard of their main booms and plunged their bowsprits under to the knightheads.

Swiftly they soared and sank, flying from the storm wrath, the storm light red on their sails, beating like a flock of sea birds past the shifting sand-dunes of Alright Island, past Cape Alright, past House Harbour in the cove, past the spray-smoked cliffs of Entry Island till they winnowed down over the sky-ramping billows like a flock of tired terns upon the sheltered surface of Pleasant Bay.

Within range of a naked sea eye, Taylor gazed amazed upon the fleet of vessels he had left in the Bay of Islands on Newfoundland.

"It's the home fleet, all right, Madeline," he shouted aloud in his gladness. "Yonder's Grant's *Evening Star* and the *Mary Bedford* and the *Pride of Haarlem* and the rest. Grant has my men on the *Evening Star*. You remember my telling you? Come on, little girl, come on. I must board him and see how they've made out, and I want Grant to see you. Here's Jean Louis's skiff handy, so we'll borrow it for a minute."

He shoved the boat clear and helped Madeline in, laughing at her bare feet in the boat bottom, and rowed out to the *Evening Star*.

Grant, standing by the rail, caught sight of them and with a mighty roar brought his fist down upon his rail.

"By all the ocean gods!" he exploded. "You—Walter? How in thunder did you come to sneak in here? Oh!—ah!—Ha! Ha! I beg your pardon, Walter. Now I see your passenger, I take that back."

"Don't be an ass, Grant!" grinned Taylor, the red blood flushing the bronze of his cheek. "Miss Boucher, let me introduce Captain Grant. Grant, Miss Boucher is the daughter of M. le Boucher head of the Island Telegraph Service, you must know. She has sheltered me as a shipwrecked waif."

They were alongside, and the next moment he was introducing all round and shaking hands over the rail with Grant, Grant's men and all his own men who had been fishing with the *Evening Star* on shares, explaining things to them.

"What about yourself, Grant?" he demanded, laughingly, amid the general babel. "Had a poor catch, eh?"

"Less than half," informed Grant. "Thought we'd fill up here on the way home and carry them in salt like the rest. Took us all our time to tack in, though. There's certainly one whale of a gale blowing. We hung off too long, you see, to make the protected harbour of Grand Entry. Expecting a shift, Walt—by Jove, there it is!"

Grant wheeled, cocking his head aloft.

"There it is, Walt. My stars, when we don't want it. Look out for your skiff, there. Look out, I say, for the skiff and Miss Boucher!"

Shouting orders to his men, Grant jumped for the wheel. The sudden heeling of the *Evening Star* before he got to it smashed one of Taylor's oars between the gunwales of the skiff and schooner. Even as he went clear with a shove of the remaining oar, he felt the force of the changed blast in his face.

In a flash, and absolutely without warning, the wind had drawn several points, veering with the flip of a weathervane from northeast to east. One moment it was pouring offshore with the pressure of an immense hydraulic nozzle. The

208 THE FOAMING FORE SHORE

next moment the nozzle was turned on shore carrying the fleet before it like so much cork.

In the skiff that spun like a toy boat toward the beach Taylor sat tilted far back against the wind's tremendous breath, his feet braced on the boat ribs, one hand clutching Madeline lest she be blown overboard, the other steering with the remaining oar so as to keep the skiff bow on to the sands. Caught by the demon of storm in the moment of fancied security, the schooners spun shoreward like Taylor's skiff, the *Evening Star* barely clearing her while she went by and fouling the *Pride of Haarlem* in her passage.

Awestruck, Taylor and Madeline gazed for a fleeting instant upon the hundreds of trapped ships, all dragging, fouling, the old head-sail-rigged schooners ripping out the pole masts of the others with their ponderous swinging booms and bowsprits. Their impression was one of a forest of bending and breaking masts, of a gale-bleached sky flagged with torn sails, checkered with flying ropes, of foam and welter, of crashing aerial death aloft and spuming tidal death below.

It was a sight uncanny, incredible, and the sight of the beaching more incredible still, yet what their eyes saw in those swift seconds Taylor knew no man might ever dispute, for it was written on the brains of others besides themselves, on the brains of Boucher, Jean Louis, Jacques Beauport, suddenly drawn from nowhere by the imminence of disaster.

—on the brains of these and many others whom they glimpsed dashing along the waveline of the fore shore pulling petrified women and children out of the way before the doomed vessels reared over them.

With the shock of an earthquake the armada of hulls cannonaded on the beach, driving on so thickly that they ground and stove and fouled each other in amazing tangles. Some drove and rebounded, overturned into the backwash that reeled them out on the reefs and bars, and thus Taylor saw Grant's *Evening Star*, her masts whipping the surface, her bottom bellying skyward, go drifting out with the jolly, joking Grant, his crew and Taylor's crew of the lost *Lady Fair*. All in one breath they went, and Taylor groaned like a man who has been knifed. Mechanically he counted the skeletons of ships on the beach ahead, a full fifty littering a four-hundred-yard strip of sand with the backwash still tugging with white teeth at a rolling few.

Decks up and tough masts still standing, keels up or heeled on their quarters, they lay jammed into the ooze and muck. One Taylor noted buried pile-like, nose first, and her stern in the air, and another his incredulous eyes followed as combined wind and surge hurled it high across the fore shore, over the spread of drying nets, over the cod flakes straddling like rows of big camp cots, sheer over into a many-angled farm plot beyond!

Then his eyes lost it as the skiff itself plunged

210 THE FOAMING FORE SHORE

on the shore between two wedged hulls and he and Madeline were thrown violently in the sand.

His arms were around her, arms and body protecting her from shock, but in spite of that the impact tore her body loose, bruising it roughly so that as Taylor floundered to his knees, she lay all white and still. With a cry of fear he stumbled to her and gathered her again in his arms.

"Oh, Madeline, Madeline, have I killed you with my thoughtlessness?" he demanded, frantically. "Madeline, speak to me. Ah! my Goddess of the Gulf, my goddess alone!"

For she stirred from the brutal shock at the sound of his entreating voice, and her wonderful Mediterranean-blue eyes smiled out of her pallid face into his. The walls of the schooners' hulls hid them from the view of any one on the beach, and Taylor, all restraint and caution forgotten, pressed her close to him.

"Dear God," he breathed. "If I had killed you! I shouldn't have risked taking you out on the bay in that great wind!"

"Ah, but you should, Walter!" she smiled, the colour creeping through her pallor. "You should for—for this!"

As their lips met, Boucher and Jacques Beaufort, searching the wrecks for them, stepped without announcement round the well of the schooner's hull.

Boucher's hands flew heavenward in consternation at the sight.

Beauport leaped forward as if to drag Madeline away from Taylor.

"Don't you put a hand on either of us!" snarled the Gloucester man.

His arm doubled back, his fist poised to drive like a battering ram into the Breton's face, and Jacques suddenly recoiled, his face dark with rage.

"But you have no right, no right whatever," he spluttered wrathfully. "I say you have no right to take her out yonder in such a gale."

"I have the right to take her anywhere," flashed Taylor, grimly. "Ask her. Ask Boucher. I think he won't deny me the right—now."

CHAPTER XXXIV

FLOTSAM FROM THE "HORNET"

WITH one accord the eyes of the three turned on Boucher.

Boucher brought his hands down with a sweep that was eloquent of utter helplessness.

"*Dieu, Dieu*, must I tell you, then?" he cried out.

Taylor stared at him, astounded, unable to interpret his attitude, and Boucher took a swift glance about to assure himself that no one else was near enough to overhear his words.

Then he bent forward, his head close to the heads of the other three.

"I know your father's story, Captain Taylor," he spoke rapidly, "and you will know Madeline's father's story when you hear his name. Jacques Beauport here knows, but except by him it has never been spoken in these islands since I came. No, no, I am not a native Acadian as you thought. My name is not Boucher, you understand. It is Pellier!"

"Admiral Pellier?" gasped Taylor, stiffening.

"*Oui*," nodded Boucher, with a surge of patent bitterness that veritably rimed his lips, "Admiral Pellier that once commanded the *Groix* in the

Fishery Protection Service on Newfoundland, my boy!"

Taylor stared speechless, for into his dazed mind rushed the memory of his father's romance. He saw with mental vision the bay of Chateau on the bleak Labrador and the house in which his mother, Marie Laval, had lived when so many bold, adventurous suitors came seeking her hand, Marie the slim offshoot of the exiled Acadians and the flower of the coast. He could feel the thrill of that old romance stir his veins as he visioned it, his mother Marie luring a score of suitors among whom the two men before him and his dead father were chief.

He saw his father wander the Labrador shores with her, perhaps as he had wandered the Magdalen shores with Madeline, pleading his love against parental obduracy. He saw her stand at the last, and against her will, before the altar with Pellier. He experienced his father's dark brooding and the verve of his oath to take her back, and the swift incidents of that taking back flew in pageant before his eyes; the seizing of the *Gray-wing*, the spiriting away of the *Esperance*, and its wild drive through a cordon of pursuers!

Boucher's words were stark, but in them was a world of meaning, the epitome of thirty years of yearning and exile in the Magdalens.

"You see," Boucher went on, tremulously, breaking in on Taylor's vision, "I could not stand it when the word came that the case against the

Graywing was dropped. I bear you no ill will, my boy. I liked you from the first moment of your landing on Amherst Island, and that was why I gave you a warning that was of no use. You have seen that I liked you? Perhaps it was because you are molded in your mother's image! Perhaps it was because of yourself! Who knows? But with your father and myself it was different. It was man against man in a struggle for all that is of worth to a man in this world. So I applied for leave to go down to your United States and take back my own."

"And the higher naval authorities would not give it?" ventured Taylor, breathlessly.

Boucher shook his head.

"No, they would not give it, and it made me bitter at the time, though I saw the reason of it later. They did not want any friction, did not want the case to assume the proportions of an international difference. The *Graywing* was confiscated, and there the matter rested. What mattered a man's personal affairs? They did not enter into diplomatic relations or good will. Ha, I was wild and hot and bitter at the time, I say, and I swore if they would not give me leave I would take leave!"

Boucher paused, his respiration coming quickly, his brown eyes filmed with memories turning from Madeline to Taylor, to Jacques Beauport and back again.

"I kept my oath," he nodded, finally. "There

is no telling what a man will do when the devil of unrest spurs him! I deserted from the *Groix*, from the rank of Admiral, and you know all that that step means and the penalty therefor! From Chateau I got another big schooner, the *Hornet*, and a crew of ten trusted men. As Marie, my Marie—your mother, Captain Taylor—had gone south on a schooner's deck, so would she come north again, on the deck of the *Hornet*! That was the plan, but the wind and sea took a hand. It was the month of November, and as wild a storm leaped up as ever I saw in the Gulf.

"In the dead of night the *Hornet* was blown off her course in the blinding snowstorm that raged, and in spite of all we could do was driven on yonder North Beach even as these schooners were driven here at our feet this moment. That is a scene that will not fade from my mind—the roaring blizzard, the terrible seas, the frozen floes battering the cliffs as we drifted helplessly in. *Voilà*, the *Hornet* was so much paper in the sop of the elements. She was gone in a breath, my ten men gone with her, and I alone was cast upon the floes at the mercy of the frosts and snows without so much as a blanket in my possession!"

CHAPTER XXXV

THE HAND OF JACQUES BEAUFORT

BOUCHER paused, living that moment again, and as they gazed on him the other three seemed to live it with him.

For vivid in their minds was the memory of the night they had all but perished amid the grinding floes on the same grim North Beach. In their consciousness rose the picture of themselves hauling the boats of the *Blavet* across from Byron Island to Grosse Island and the treacherous gale smashing the path of their feet to atoms and hurling them afloat in their puny craft.

A grim picture of one of the grimmest, deadliest beaches of all the beaches of the Seven Seas!

"My Heavens, father, my Heavens!" breathed Madeline, tensely.

"True!" he returned. "And it is a miracle I am here to tell you the tale. For many days, the better part of a week, so long that I began to rave and lose all track of time, I wandered on the ice trying to make my way to the land of the North Beach, satisfying my hunger and thirst with snow and ice. At last I succeeded and collapsed with cold and weakness, but some of the Island fishermen had sighted me and come to my aid. *Dieu,*

I was a patient of patients then, and not a doctor in the Islands! My tongue swollen with snow-eating, frost-bitten everywhere, half-starved, half-mad with thirst and raving like a maniac! *Tiens*, there was your fine Admiral of the *Groix*—*oui*, the dented plaything of the Gulf!”

“Yet you survived in spite of all!” exclaimed Taylor in admiration.

“*Oui*, as you see, but I think it was the devil of unrest, the fires of hell within me that fought the battle, not myself, my physical self, I mean! I was young, you see, and through thirty years I have tamed the fires and the unrest. The imprisonment of the lonely Magdalens has done it. My landing was in November, the end of the month, and the *Hornet* was lost. It was in the first week of December that the fishermen found me. The regular vessels of the Gulf had made their last run and, even as you, Captain Taylor, I was isolated here.

“I could not leave till summer at the earliest, and when summer came I did not want to leave. For I first managed to communicate with Jacques Beauport, here, who had also taken French leave of the *Groix* at my bribe and who had taken charge of my little Madeline at Chateau till I could work out my plan. But the reply Jacques sent me changed the course of everything. My Marie had married again, and the vessels of the French Navy on the Fishery Protection Service were scouring the coasts for the deserting Admiral Pellier.

"Jacques was of low rank, and they did not spend money over him. An admiral was different, and I had active enemies at home. Well, what need to say more? The Magdalen Islands would be the last place in the wide world they would look for me, a haven of havens for a despairing, hunted man. *Voilà*, you have it all. I entered the Telegraph Service and stayed on till the way was clear for Jacques to come and bring with him my little Madeline from Chateau!"

"My God, what suffering and suspense and heartache, father!" cried Madeline.

She loosed her arms from Taylor's grip and flung them impulsively round Boucher's neck.

"My father," she faltered, tears in her wonderful blue eyes, "and you never let me know of anything, never breathed a word of this to me! You let me believe I was born here and that my mother died when I was born!"

"*Oui*, you were only a toddler and could not remember, you see."

"But bearing it all yourself! Why did you not let me share it with you?"

"What need?" quavered Boucher, the tears of old sadness and despair springing to his own brown eyes. "What gain, my little Madeline? Why should I make you unhappy with buried sorrows and darken your young life with the clouds of my own?"

"But wait—wait a minute!" stammered Taylor, his brain reeling from surprise and his bruised

frame a-tremble with inward qualms as the emotion of father and daughter brought the truth flashing to the forefront through his own mingled feelings. "There's something wrong here, some mistake. You say she is your flesh-and-blood daughter? Not a foster-daughter? You say she is the real Madeline Pellier?"

"*Certainement*," gloated Beauport, breaking in, "she is no other. Madeline Pellier of your own blood, your very half-sister and no wife of yours if you live one thousand years!"

"You hound!" snarled Taylor. "You're not the only one who knows Chateau. I tell you there's some mistake. She can't be Madeline Pellier. Madeline Pellier is dead. She died when a little child, for I have stood by her grave and read her name more than once in the ruined graveyard at Chateau!"

"You lie!" shrieked Jacques, vehemently. "You perjure yourself!"

In the Breton's rage and hate Taylor thought he detected a dawning whimper of fear, but it was only the rage and hate that his hot blood challenged. He leaped instantly, his hands at Beauport's throat, pinning him against the curve of the schooner's hull.

"I don't lie, Beauport!" he gritted. "I don't perjure myself. Besides, marked graves don't lie, and there never was but one Madeline Pellier on the Labrador. You lie, Jacques. You perjure yourself. There's underhand work in this some-

where, and you've done it unknown to Boucher—to—Admiral Pellier. By heavens, out with it! Isn't she someone else?"

Taylor's powerful hands throttled like steel bands round Beauport's throat.

Jacques grew red and purple and all but choked as he struggled.

"Isn't she?" demanded the Gloucester man, implacably.

Beauport gurgled and convulsively nodded his head, his veins black with constriction.

"And her name?" demanded Taylor, easing his grip a little to let breath into the Breton's wind-pipe.

"*Oui*, her name?" echoed Boucher, glaring over the Gloucester man's shoulder at the pinned Beauport.

Beauport's nod had been like a red-hot goad to Boucher, for like a flash he had sprung and plucked out the long knife that Jacques wore under his casque. The steel poised within an inch of the Breton's eyes.

"Her name, you *canaille*, you dog of a kidnapper!" he menaced. "Her name and what happened to my little Madeline or you will be Jacques the Blind!"

"I had no hand in it," cringed the purple Jacques. "Your little Madeline was dead of fever before I got your word to come. *Comment?* I did it in good faith, in a kindness if you will listen. You had suffered. I had not the heart to bring

you the news of the little Madeline's death on top of all. So I brought another in her place. They were of an age and similarity, and toddlers change so that I knew you would never know unless you went to Chateau, and I had no fear of that with the Navy looking for you. Madeline is she—she that was the waif of Andrew Lisand lost on the *Cormorant* in the Strait of Belle Isle!"

"Madeline Lisand!" breathed Taylor, stepping back. "Thank God, Madeline, thank the good God of sailormen!"

While the clamorous rush of the salvagers over-running the wrecks ebbed and flowed about their screened corner, the four stood staring silently at each other, a thousand mingled emotions sparkling from eye to eye, till in a deep, throaty blast the purl of a steamer's siren broke their silence.

Simultaneously they turned, their separate glances switching seaward.

"The Pictou boat!" gasped Madeline.

"*Oui*, and something else," leered Beauport, fingering his bruised throat and pointing to another dark hull just off Red Cape. "*Capitaine* Taylor is not the lord of all things yet. See? The French cruiser *Titan*!"

"Ah, you spiteful devil, Jacques!" flashed Madeline, intuitively. "You sent for it. That was why you boarded the ice-breaker *Montcalm* that day—to have her captain send a cable for you from the mainland!"

"And why should I not?" growled Beauport, maliciously. "He will face the law."

With a rush Taylor leaped at Jacques again, but Madeline caught his arm and whispered in his ear.

"Not that, Walter," she decided, quick of wit. "We must get away, you and I. Come, we must run for Jean Louis's charette—quick!"

Even as she pulled Taylor away, she turned about with a surge of tenderness and drew down her father's face between her palms.

"But I am your little Madeline still," she whispered to him. "And I will come back. We both will come back. For listen: We will board the Pictou steamer at the port of Grand Entry on Coffin Island. That will be after its call here, and neither Jacques nor the commander of the *Titan* will know. I cannot let them take him back to St. John's now, cannot let him out of my sight for fear of what that crazed Jacques might do. Before morning we shall be on the mainland, but oh, my father in spite of all, we will come back to you when things blow clear!"

She kissed him passionately in the depths of his brown beard before she let him push her away with Taylor.

"Yes, yes, my little Madeline," he faltered. "And if they should happen to catch you, I will not let them part you two without some trouble. I am magistrate here under the Province of Quebec and if they call on me to arrest him I will not hand

him over. I will make them fight for extradition. Go, and meanwhile I will promise that Beauport does not trail you. *Oui*, and if he opens his lips about me, he will never trail any one any more. Hurry, before the *Titan* gets into the bay!"

CHAPTER XXXVI

FLIGHT

LOOKING back as they ran, Madeline and Taylor saw a strange sight, a magistrate taking the law into his own hands. With the Breton's own knife Boucher stood in the base of the angle between the schooner hulls, penning him there while the Pictou mail boat and the Service cruiser steamed in through heavy breaking seas toward the wreck-strewn fore shore of Pleasant Bay.

"Jean Louis!" cried Madeline, frantically. "Where is he? Ah, yonder he is with the salvagers! Jean, Jean, for the love of Heaven, hurry!"

Jean Louis, stepping from deck to deck of the beached schooners, so close they lay together, turned from his search of the wreckage at her startling cry and took two or three long jumps toward them.

"What is it?" he demanded, anxiously. "Are you hurt? Are either of you hurt?"

"No, no, the charette! Have you it here on the beach anywhere?"

"No, it is at home," Jean informed. "I was using the boat, you see. Beast and cart are in the yard at the barn."

"Then run!" she exhorted. "It is a bitter thing to leave like this without a word of pity for these men of the fleets, but it has to be, Jean, and there are lots of salvagers without you. Run like the wind and get your charette ready for us. Walter and I will be at your heels. Look, Jean—you understand? The *Titan*! We must be away before it gets in to the beach."

In her frenzy Madeline shook Jean Louis till his gaunt body rattled, but Jean was not by any means slow of wit.

He stared a second at the smoking *Titan* and another second at the ruffled two before him.

"*Oui*, I understand," he burst out. "So that is it, eh? Then they will not catch your Captain Taylor unless they first catch my beast, and that I swear they cannot do once he had his heels well clicking. Have no fear, Mademoiselle Madeline, I will get him harnessed for you!"

He was off running as he spoke, like an animated scarecrow, his sealskin galoshes and banded pantaloons flapping wildly in his immense strides. Run as they might, he easily out-distanced Madeline and Taylor, tearing up the hill, past the new house and into the yard at the barn.

Amazed at his antics, his household streamed forth to see, the stout Madame waddling hurriedly in his wake and the twins Philip and Bonaparte, their solemnity thrown to the winds, shrieking in glee as they pelted after in the hope of some excitement.

When Madeline and Taylor rushed up, Jean Louis was backing his beast into the shafts of the charette, tracing up and answering Madame's volleyed questions all in a single second.

"*Voilà*, here they are puffing, to see for your incredulous self!" he exclaimed. "All ready for you as I promised, *mes enfants*! In with you."

Half laughing, half crying in her excitement, Madeline seized Madame Louis by her fat cheeks, explaining to her in incoherent words what it all meant, kissing her and the twins good-bye, and promising wildly to come back on a vague day. Then she wheeled to the waiting cart.

"The harness, Walter—see that it's all sound for the hills!" she cautioned as she went to get in. "And the whip. Throw it in. Ah, but we must make time!"

She sprang with that supple run and sway of her limbs into the two-wheeled cart. While Jean Louis darted into the new barn and brought out the whip, Taylor, running a hasty hand over the shaggy horse's harness, assured himself that every buckle was well fastened, and whip in hand, leaped up beside her with a shout of good-bye to the faithful Jean.

With a spin and shower of wet sand from the wheels they were off to shouted good-byes, whirling along the road that led to Grindstone Island at a breakneck speed. Uphill they never slackened. Downhill they plunged and galloped, winding by the rim of the Island on the very edge of the sea.

There was need for haste. Amherst Island itself ran over ten miles long, and beyond it the other islands of the main group were strung out to a length of more than fifty miles. The gale had blown itself out with the shift of the wind, and the wind itself was falling to a mere sailing breeze, but a tremendous sea was running and they knew that the Pictou steamer would not linger long where even two of the three Government wharves on the Islands would not be able to afford safe anchorage and the rest of the calls would have to be made by standing offshore and ferrying with the fishermen's boats.

Only at Grand Entry on Coffin Island were they certain of boarding her, and to board her they must be there as soon as she. For Grand Entry was the solitary protected harbour on the coasts, and though storms and swell might sweep the shallow entrance and bare its very sands, a vessel inside could rest secure while she did her loading and unloading.

Then, too, the tide would soon be on the turn, and once it commenced to rise the precarious sand bars connecting the string of Islands could not be crossed at all!

So Taylor lashed his sturdy Island beast along, dropping the sunset behind in a sky of hammered brass and raising the virgin moon out of her quick-silver bath ahead.

Continually they passed small schooners putting out over the great swell through the aftermath

of the storm to see what damage had been done to their near-by nets. They passed, also, berry pickers in sunbonnets and calico dresses homing with full pails, the Island farmers with loads of fragrant meadow hay or golden pyramids of the first early wheat sheaves.

These stared in wonder at the recklessness and haste of the rolling charette as it shot by, but Taylor offered no hail that perchance might give Jacques Beauport and the *Titan's* men a clue if they should be trying to trace them.

He lashed grimly on and on along the strange sea road, the road the like of which was not to be found anywhere else in the world, with the smell of the kelp coming up to them on the night breeze, the long, fronded sea grasses and waving mosses catching and tangling in their whirring wheels as they spun by and the sleek, rolling surges breaking beside and splashing the horse's legs so that he stamped the salt spray in their faces as he galloped.

Of wonderful speed for all his unkempt appearance, of remarkable soundness of wind, endowed with the same tireless endurance as the Shetland but bigger framed, the charette horse scarcely slackened unless Taylor pulled him up and breathed him a minute or two upon the steeps.

Their furious driving had carried them to Grindstone, and they pressed on without pause lest the tide should mask the treacherous quicksands between Grindstone and Wolf and Wolf and Grosse.

Taylor had no knowledge of the route through the quicksands but Madeline had driven them all her life and at her direction he wound about the treacherous traps, wheeling flat on old ocean's bottom over carpets of vivid sea mosses and ferns, over beds of beautiful shells and multicoloured sea anemones, by pools filled with brilliant fish, marine worms, and crawling lobsters and crabs.

In spite of their haste the tide was creeping in, and on some bars between Grindstone and Wolf the water in places reached over the horse's fetlocks and came half-way up to the hubs of the cart.

"Hurry, Walter, hurry!" Madeline urged. "Drive faster or the tide may cut us off before we reach Coffin Island!"

Taylor shook out his horse and plied the whip again. Over the back of snarling Wolf they drove, keeping to the main ridge of lava geysered up from the bottom of the sea in the azoic ages and covered through the long centuries by the ever-swirling sands of the sea. Reefs and outer isles, surface rocks and bars slid past.

Shrouded in the moonlight out yonder floated fearsome Deadman as it had floated since the beginning of time, the never-salvaged body, the murdered rock giant more than twenty-four hundred feet long lying on his back on the wave. On his scappled head, his ribbed chest, his bony toes the walrus used to haul out in thousands in the

days of the Biscayans, but now nothing clothed his naked body but the shroud of the moonbeams and débris of doomed ships.

Involuntarily, Madeline shuddered as they pressed along. Through all the points of the compass they had twisted and turned in their winding flight. Like a string of sausages the Islands looped about, as if thrown down at hazard. Amherst Island had carried them nearly due east. Grindstone Island and Wolf Island swung them to the north. Now Grosse Island curved them eastward, and East Island led them down on Coffin to the south.

Named after the sea captain to whom the crown grant of the Magdalens had been given and graced by the protected harbour of Grand Entry, it was the last of the connected main group, and on its steep cliffs Taylor pulled up his heaving horse and consulted his watch.

"Ten o'clock, Madeline!" he announced. "Though the moon is as bright as day! The steamer ought to be here soon. She should make Grand Entry by water as quickly as we did by land. By Jove, yes—look, there are her lights coming in!"

"And other lights, too!" exclaimed Madeline in dismay as she stared out over the jewelled harbour toward its shallow entrance. "It's the cruiser *Titan*. They've guessed our move. Quick, Walter, back before they see us against the skyline!"

With a growl of chagrin Taylor wheeled the charette and raced back the way they had come.

"I wonder if they saw?" he kept reiterating as he drove at top speed. "I wonder if they did? If they didn't, we've a boarding chance yet!"

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE END OF THE CHASE

ON THE tide-washed bars between Coffin and East islands the horse suddenly shied and stopped as the air overhead was ripped with a tearing sound.

A huge spout of sand and spray shot up on the narrow road in front. Then the report reached their ears, the bellowing, quaking shock of a cruiser's four-inch gun.

Taylor and Madeline wheeled on their seats and stared. Close in to the shoals they glimpsed the *Titan* with two figures on her bridge, one strange figure in uniform, the other the familiar figure of Jacques Beauport silhouetted against the silvery sky in his loose casque.

"They saw!" cried Madeline. "They saw us on the Coffin cliffs!"

While she spoke another shell burst ahead, and Taylor sprang up in the charette with a cry of rage.

"The dogs! The devils!" he anathematized. "To shell us, to shell a woman! They know you're here."

Madeline pointed to the bar with the tide lapping over it.

"It's not us but the road they're shelling, Walter," she corrected.

Another mud mushroom rose up and crumbled, and the purpose of the shelling suddenly broke upon Taylor's mind. It was beautiful gunnery practice and at the same time a piece of diabolical ingenuity, the four-inch gun quake-quaking and the shells falling every minute on the narrow path between the quicksands, holding them back while the swirling tide came up foot by foot.

"When it's so deep that we can't cross they'll send a boat ashore and take us!" Madeline prophesied bitterly.

"But they can't do anything so high-handed as that!" protested Taylor. "They're on the Newfoundland Service and the Magdalens are under the jurisdiction of Quebec. They can't take me here without first setting the law in motion through your father."

"They'll take you first and set the law in motion afterward," transposed Madeline. "That is the way with Jacques Beauport."

"By Heavens, then they'll not take me at all!" gritted Taylor. "We'll try Byron, Madeline. Maybe there's a chance. You think the boat will call there?"

"Oh, yes, and at the Bird Rocks! It goes to the light only once a month, and this is the first trip, you see. It will have to land supplies for Kellan on Byron and Cormier the keeper of the light."

"Then we'll try for her off the Main Group!"

decided Taylor, swiftly. "It's our only chance. The swell's heavy. I don't want you to risk it if you're afraid, though. Are you afraid to dare it, Madeline?"

"I'll dare anything with you, Walter. Go on. What are you going to do with the charette?"

"Back it out of this!"

Feverishly he leaped down and helped Madeline out on solid footing. Backing the cart till he could turn and swing it up to higher ground out of reach of the incoming tide, Taylor unhitched the horse and freed it to crop the coarse grass that crowned the sand-dunes. There they left it where Jean Louis would find it when he came looking and dived into the obscurity of the dunes themselves across to the opposite shore of the island. Straight for a little enclosed, lagoon-like cove where they knew the fishermen were accustomed to leave their boats riding at anchor ready to flit out in the gray of the dawn they ran, losing the cruiser behind the shoulders of the dunes and cliffs.

At once the firing from the *Titan* stopped. They did not know whether a boat was being lowered or not, but they dared not pause to listen. Not only must they be out of the cove but out of sight along the steep shores before any man from the cruiser should cross the island.

Taylor seized Madeline's hand, pulling her along at a rapid rate, down the slopes of the sand-dunes and out upon the decks of the nearest skiffs, sloops

and schooners riding so thickly that they could step from gunwale to gunwale. He chose a large sloop for its superior drawing power, now that the wind had lost most of its brutal force, and ran up the great main sail.

There was rise enough in the tide to squeeze over the bar at the entrance of the cove, and once over, Taylor hugged the concealing shores of East Island till he could square away for Byron without being detected by possible sentinels.

It was a brave sailor's breeze that drove them swiftly over the undulating water hills to Byron, and no light or blot upon the moon-pearled deep behind could be discerned by the watching Madeline, nothing at all but the wide phalanxes of the rollers driving on their endless crusade under the starred banner of Heaven. Not till they ran under Byron's sullen cliffs and luffed up off Kellan's stages where by the light of the moon they could see the dark figures of men rolling the barrels of fish down to be shipped on the coming steamer.

"She won't be long," declared Taylor, coming about. "They're getting Kellan's stuff ready for her. But we won't run in till we see if she comes alone. Can you see anything of her lights yet, Madeline?"

"No, I can't see a thing but the swing and heave of the waves," observed Madeline, searching the apparently empty sea.

But abruptly she cried out in a low voice and

pointed toward a lapis-lazuli hollow between two surge crests of pearl.

"Yes, a sail!" she exclaimed. "A sloop like ours, only larger!"

"It's Beauport, then, as sure as we're afloat!"

"But it can't be Jacques Beauport, Walter. He was on the bridge of the *Titan*."

"Yes, but how long would it take to slip a boat ashore? It's Beauport, all right. Nobody else would have occasion to make the crossing to Byron to-night."

"But why wouldn't he stay on the bridge and cross with the *Titan* if need be?"

"The *Titan* daren't try it and perhaps miss me. They couldn't tell for sure, you see, just where we'd gone. We might be crossing to Byron or we might have run only a little way offshore to elude them with the intention of returning to Coffin Island again. You understand their moves? The *Titan* couldn't do anything else in reason but stand off Grand Entry to see I didn't get aboard the steamer there, with Jacques trying to locate us in the sloop if we'd gone offshore for good.

"Yes, Jacques has guessed again, and guessed right at that. He has a scent like a hound. Likely he has followed our tracks to the lagoon and taken another sloop for Byron on that chance. By Jove, yes—yes, Madeline, I'm right! Look, lights behind his sail, not such a long way behind either, off East Island! Steamer's lights ahead; cruiser's lights behind; the Pictou mail boat and the *Titan*!"

Abruptly he sat down in the cockpit again and filled away toward the Bird Rocks, watching the mainsail grow behind him minute by minute. Jacques had the larger sloop. They saw that plainly. The vaster power of his sail hauled him up on them foot by foot, till they could see his dark, mocking face leering at them over every roller crest. Climbing each smooth green slope they mounted, he came, crashing into every trough they left, gaining, gaining till a hail could carry from one craft to the other.

"*Dieu*, a fine chase you've led us!" he roared, tiller in one hand, sheet in the other.

"It's not ended yet," Taylor roared back, "but there's an end to it, Jacques, if you like to see it through. There'll be a fine swell on the Bird Rocks after the storm."

"You *diable* fool, *Capitaine*, you're crazy in the head. Neither man nor devil can land a sloop on the Bird Rocks to-night. Come about and be done with it. The *Titan* will be at Byron in a few moments. Come about, I say!"

Taylor made a feint of coming about, and instantly Jacques shot his sloop up into the wind to stand by. But with Jacques in the wind, Taylor held on, gaining considerably while the Breton cursed from the distance as he came back on his course and began to drive his sloop up anew.

Ahead loomed the Bird Rocks, the Little Bird dark as an ocean cavern but the Great Bird flaming with the burning beacon that cast its rays

more than a score of miles across those waters of storm. Huge seas were bombing the three-hundred-foot rock upon which it stood, and Madeline saw at a glance that the landing, difficult at all times, was never more difficult than now.

"There's Damion Cormier warning us off!" she cried. "And Mrs. Cormier, too. The waves are breaking high up the rock." Taylor stared up the spray-sheeted rocks, up the pillar of flame, to see the minute faces of the lighthouse keeper and his wife looking down at them and waving frantic warnings. Also, he saw a big net basket being lowered and two men dropping down and yelling something to them that sounded like shoutings from the depths of a well in the demoniacal tumult of the breaking surge.

"Who are those yelling at us?" shouted Taylor, raising his voice for Madeline's ear not two feet away.

"Arsène Turbide and Charles!" she shouted back. "They're helping Damion. I expect they're saying we'd better jump when we touch the rocks. There's no hope of saving the sloop, Walter?"

"Not a fighting hope! Keep close to me when the crash comes so that I can get my hands on you!"

He cast a hasty glance over his shoulder and stared straight into Beauport's grinning, stubble-bearded face once more. Over the face, bobbing in its cockpit, he glimpsed the lights of the Pictou mail boat and those of the cruiser *Titan* like the

lanterns of Fate in the distance. The mail boat had made her call at Byron and was steaming rapidly for the Bird Rocks. While the *Titan* was evidently patrolling midway with a two-fold purpose, that of keeping watch on the waters in the vicinity of Byron to prevent Taylor leaving if he should have made a secret landing there and that of speaking the Pictou steamer for word of him on its return from the Bird Rocks.

"Ha, *Capitaine*," laughed Beauport, "the chase has narrowed down to one lone isle in the Gulf, and we are all here with you. There is no escape."

He recklessly drove his sloop up abeam of them on an immense roller, so dangerously close that Taylor cried out in warning.

"Sheer off! Spill your wind!" he bellowed. "You'll jam us first thing——"

But Jacques held his sheet with a turn, refusing to cast off. He drifted down on them with the apparent intention of boarding them, and the next instant the locked sloops spun high and crashed into the black cliffs of the Great Bird.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

IN THE HEART OF THE BUOY

AS THEIR bodies, flung like manikins from the grinding sloops, struck the cliffs, Taylor seized Madeline and clung desperately, blindly, swept by the upshooting spray, hands and feet in the crevice of the worn rock, his water-blinded eyes straining for sight of the running Tubides—till with a wild shout their brown faces appeared and their brown hands slipped over the cliffs, pulling them in as seamen haul a net.

“*Mon Dieu*, Mademoiselle Madeline!” screeched Arsène. “It is the ghost of you! and—and——”

“Taylor, Captain Taylor!” panted the Gloucester man.

“But what stark madness was in you to come here in a sloop in this sea?” demanded Charles. “And the other man, Captain Taylor? Who sailed the other sloop so like a devil that did not care?”

“His—his body!” exclaimed Taylor, his chest still heaving from the strain.

He pointed to a brown smudge lodged on a ledge of the crags.

“No, not his body—nothing but his coat, floated

up out of his cockpit, I would guess!" announced Arsène, making a dive for the ledge and clambering back with Beauport's casque in his hands.

"Aye, he was in his jersey and sitting on his folded casque," confirmed Taylor.

"He was a Breton, eh?" deduced Arsène, running his hand into the patch pockets inside the breast.

"Jacques Beauport!" Madeline breathed.

"*Mon Dieu*, you say so? A bold sailor gone on his last cruise, then! And look, he has left us some message or other."

Arsène drew out a wet, crumpled piece of paper and handed it to Taylor.

"Here, Captain Taylor, you are a better reader than I am, no doubt!"

Still in a sort of daze from the shock of the dashing on the rocks, Taylor examined the paper under the glow of the beacon, and at a glance he recognized it as a telegram from the Fisheries Department at St. John's, a telegram dispatched to Jacques at Humbermouth and, failing delivery there, relayed to the Grindstone station of the Magdalens over the newly repaired cable.

"Listen, Madeline," Taylor begged in a voice that trembled with gladness:

Recent decision of Hague gives American fishermen use of disputed bays and harbours. Conduct your fishing stations accordingly. This is official notice to all merchants.

Same official notice awaits *Titan* and other Service vessels at sea when they make Humbermouth.

He turned to her with the gladness in his voice reflected in his face.

"He was reckless! He was mad!" Taylor avowed. "He kept that official notice dark and tried his worst to send me back on the *Titan* to St. John's. And, by heavens, he has paid the price!"

Before the astonished Turbides Madeline seized Taylor's hands, her eyes shining in ecstasy.

"Then all they can do now is fine you, Walter!" she rejoiced. "They can't imprison you at St. John's and try you for a breach of the Newfoundland laws. You were in water you had a right to, and there's only the Sunday infraction. They can't do anything but fine you, can they?"

"Not legally," exulted Taylor, "but I don't trust that *Titan* and its commander who was such a friend of Beauport's. And they've acted so high-handedly that I'm not going back to St. John's to pay that fine till I go of my own sweet will, Madeline—till we both go of our own sweet will! We must give the cruiser the slip yet or they may trump up some other charge against me. Quick, here's the Pictou mail boat coming in now!"

"Oh, Mrs. Cormier will help us, you may be sure of that!" declared Madeline as they raced after the Turbides over the rocks toward the light-house. "She knows me well, and Damion, too."

They were running swiftly, so as to climb the light before the steamer should get in close enough to sight them. They did not know who com-

manded her. It might be someone who would readily turn them over to the *Titan*, or again it might be someone who bore no love toward the spying fishery vessels.

They could take no chance, but ran at top speed, disturbing acres of sea birds that made the rocks their nesting grounds and sending them aloft in clamouring flocks. The air above their heads was filled with caterwauling gulls and ghostly gannets huge as geese slanting weirdly round and round in the blinding lighthouse beams.

Into the big net basket Taylor and Madeline leaped and were hurriedly drawn up the pillar to the wondering Cormier and his wife above.

"My dear Madeline!" gasped Mrs. Cormier. "I had no idea there was a woman in either of those sloops, and I never dreamed it would be you. Why were you trying to drown yourself like that? Were you both out fishing when the storm came up?"

"No, no," explained Madeline the impulsive, throwing her arms about Mrs. Cormier's neck and kissing her. "We are both fugitives, Captain Taylor and I, and you must smuggle us aboard the Pictou boat this minute. The French cruiser *Titan* is out there watching for Captain Taylor and we must get past it."

In brief sentences she went on to enlighten them as to the reason of their flight.

"But we must be quick!" she concluded. "Come, hide us in anything you're sending back, empty boxes, empty barrels, anything."

"There are some deal boxes," spoke the crafty Cormier, "but I am a little afraid of their small size."

"What about the buoy?" cut in the quick-eyed Taylor.

He pointed to a large buoy, which, judging from its scarred condition, had evidently been lately taken off the reefs.

"Are you sending it back, Cormier?" he demanded.

"Yes," nodded Damion, "back to be repainted."

"By Jove, then that's it!" decided Taylor, springing to the buoy and taking off the cover. "They'll never see anything suspicious in a buoy. Only its weight might give us away unless you have the Turbides handle it, Cormier."

"But yes, I will see to that," promised Damion. "Hurry in with you. There goes her whistle. She is here."

Taylor raised Madeline, lowered her into the standing buoy, and climbed in himself. Damion Cormier replaced the cover, but instead of using the bolt fastenings and clamping it on, he fastened it only temporarily with a loop of rope, the ends of which were dropped inside so that Taylor could slip the cover when he wished.

The interior was cramped, oppressive, but enough air filtered through the cover to prevent any danger of suffocation. For a few silent minutes they waited, hearing nothing but the movements of Cormier and his wife, till the rumble of

the voices of Charles and Arsène sounded faintly in their ears.

Then they felt themselves uplifted by the Turbides, lowered in the net basket to the creak of the working windlass, bumped into a boat, and hoisted to the mail steamer's deck. Another freshly painted buoy, several boxes, sacks, bundles, and tins knocked them about roughly in the interchange, for it was a busy quarter of an hour to land the lighthouse supplies for its four inhabitants, and the Pictou boat did not care to linger long by the beetling cliffs where the waves broke with appalling force, sending the spray flying upward for a full hundred and fifty feet against the crags.

It was impossible to anchor. Madeline and Taylor inside the buoy could feel the slow throb of the propeller and knew the steamer was lying bow on to the roll with just enough headway to keep her stationary while the boxes and bales were slung.

"Where shall we put it, Captain Cumberland?" they heard Charles and Arsène ask finally.

"It's Captain Cumberland, Walter," whispered Madeline. "That's splendid. He's a friend of my father and me."

"Better put it on the bridge," they heard a gruff voice direct. "There are heavy seas breaking, and I nearly lost the other off the forward deck coming over!"

Again they felt themselves carried by the Tur-

bides up the bridge ladder, across the platform, and lashed to the bridge rail under the weather cloths. Someone came and stood beside. Captain Cumberland's gruff voice rumbled in the speaking tube. The steamer's siren blew, and the throb of the propeller quickened.

"We're under way to the mainland at last, Madeline!" breathed Taylor, tensely.

Suddenly, like the weak production of a shout in the receiver of a telephone, they caught the blare of a megaphone from across a cable's length of sea.

"Ahoy, steamer! Ahoy, Captain Cumberland! Seen anything of Beauport or Taylor round the Bird Rocks? Did you sight two sloops anywhere there?"

"Not a thing!" roared Cumberland through his own megaphone. "Don't try to put a sloop story over on me. A sloop couldn't live three minutes round the Bird Rocks to-night, let alone land there. The seas are breaking half-way up the Great Bird!"

"Right O!" came back. "Then our man must be hiding around Coffin or East yet. We'll just keep you in sight, if you don't mind, till you're well clear of the Islands. Good-bye. And *bon voyage!*"

"Safe!" exulted Taylor.

And heart to heart, in the gloom of the buoy, his lips found hers.

For an hour the Pictou boat held on her homeward course before they heard the feet of Captain Cumberland passing by them on his way to the

chart room. Taylor silently slipped the cover off the buoy, and like apparitions they rose, head and shoulders visible, before Cumberland's incredulous eyes.

"God bless my seafaring soul!" he ejaculated, as he recognized the two whose flight had put all the Islands in a turmoil and for news of whom the cruiser *Titan* had pestered him at every port of call.

Taylor poised the heavy cover of the buoy in mock menace.

"Captain Cumberland, I must warn you not to alter your course a single point!" he threatened.

The gray-haired Cumberland put out a hand to each of them, his wrinkled eyes smiling into Madeline's eyes of Mediterranean blue.

"Captain Taylor, you may put that missile down," he laughed. "You have a mightier weapon here!"

Playfully he kissed Madeline's hand and, still laughing, shuffled on to his chart room.

"Back in a moment," he nodded. "I just want to have a glance at the chart before I order the wheelsman to put her over for Pictou."

Together Madeline and Taylor stepped out of the buoy to the dim, spray-swept bridge with the pearl-crested billows rolling wide on either quarter and the moon shining through a curtain of radium cloud lace.

"Home! Home on a deck once more!" rejoiced Taylor, drawing the night air and the salt

248 THE FOAMING FORE SHORE

savour and the smell of paint and rope and canvas into his lungs with a mighty draft.

"Aye, Walter, 'I Shall Come Home When the Ebb Tide Flows'," murmured Madeline. "Do you remember?"

Very softly she began to sing the words of the song that had greeted Taylor the first night he was hurled on Amherst Beach:

I shall come home when the ebb tide flows;
Go where I may, there is One who knows;
Fierce though the gale,
I shall prevail;
I shall come home when the ebb tide flows.

THE END

